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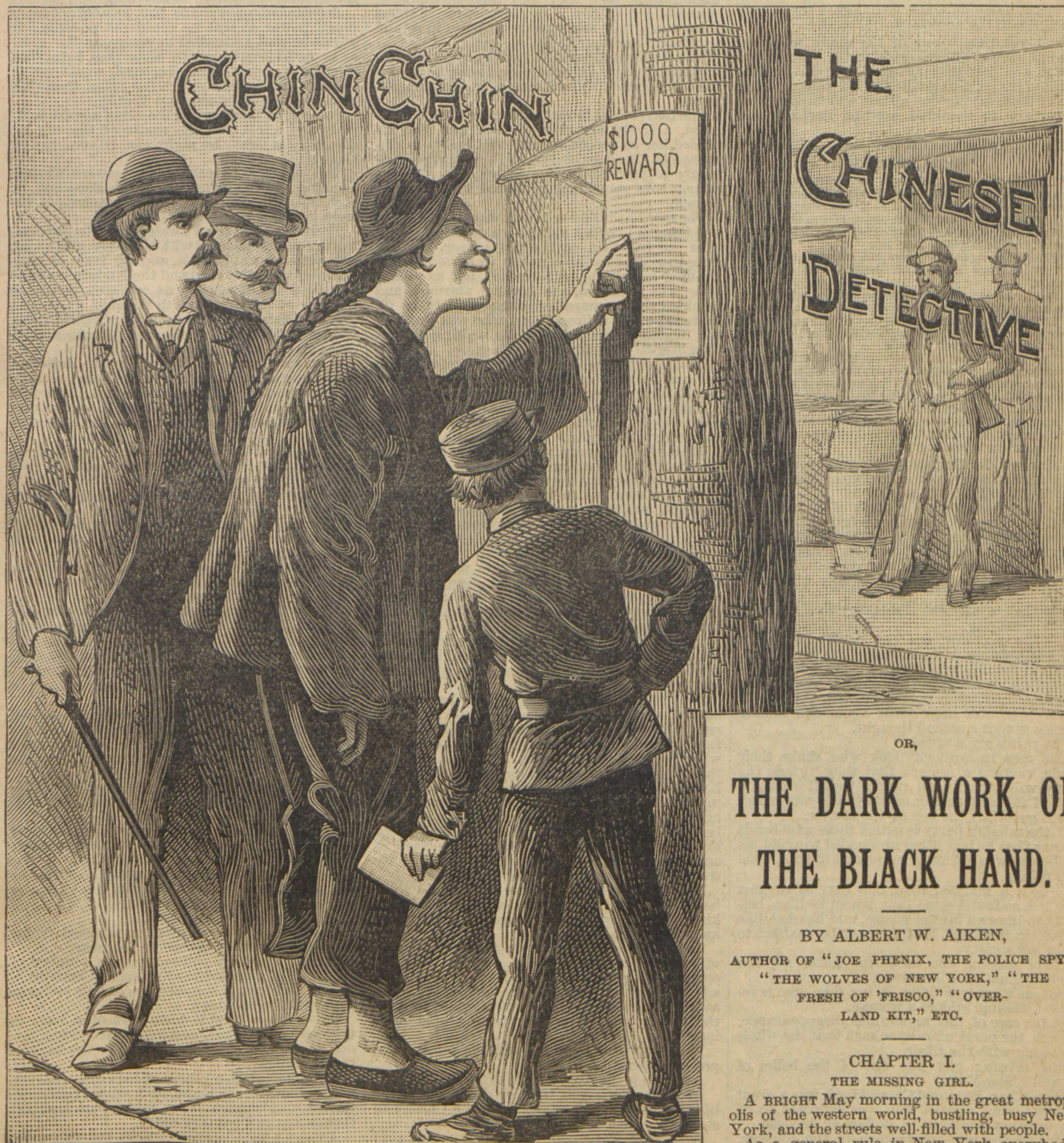
Vol. XXXVII.

Published Every  
Wednesday.

*Beadle & Adams, Publishers,*  
98 WILLIAM STREET, N. Y., November 30, 1887.

Ten Cents a Copy.  
\$5.00 a Year.

No. 475



"ME T'INK ME CATCHEE GAL, ALLE SAMEE 'MELICAN MAN!" HE MURMURED, AND THEN HE CLOSED HIS EYES AND WINKED SIGNIFICANTLY AT THE PLACARD.

## OR, THE DARK WORK OF THE BLACK HAND.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,  
AUTHOR OF "JOE PHENIX, THE POLICE SPY,"  
"THE WOLVES OF NEW YORK," "THE  
FRESH OF FRISCO," "OVER-  
LAND KIT," ETC.

### CHAPTER I. THE MISSING GIRL.

A BRIGHT May morning in the great metropolis of the western world, bustling, busy New York, and the streets well-filled with people. As a general rule in New York everybody seems to be in a hurry when in the street, particularly in the thoroughfares devoted to busi-



ness purposes, and haste along as though there was not a moment to lose.

But on the morning of which we write almost everybody found time to stop for a few moments and take a look at some placards with which the bill-posters had literally adorned the dead walls of the city.

These placards could be seen almost everywhere that there was space to put them, and they excited far more attention than is usually bestowed upon such things by the busy inhabitants of the metropolis, who are used to seeing all sorts of announcements posted upon the dead walls, but generally they hurry by without taking the trouble to examine them at all, but this placard which we have mentioned was no ordinary one, and the glaring head-line, standing out in the boldest of type and the blackest of ink was of a nature calculated to attract the attention of even an indifferent observer.

In front of each of the bills, which were posted so as to be easily read by the passers-by, a knot of people were collected, just as the busy men of New York always find time to stop and read the bulletin-boards displayed in front of the newspaper offices, particularly at such times when matters of great public interest are described in the daily journals, yacht races, prize-fights—when the champion bully of England comes to hammer the champion fisticuff ruffian of America—the chances of the outbreak of a great foreign war, or anything of a sensational kind.

The people who stopped in their hurried career to gaze at the hand-bill were as deeply interested by the small announcement as are the crowds who gape at the newspaper bulletins.

And yet, hardly one of the many who read the bill were at all concerned in the matter, but it was a subject that possessed a great fascination for the general public for all that, it being one of those mysterious affairs which appeal so powerfully to mankind, exciting curiosity and interest.

The placard ran as follows:

"\$1,000 REWARD!

"The above-named sum will be given to any one who will furnish information which will lead to the recovery, dead or alive, of Miss Evangeline Carrickford, who mysteriously disappeared from the house of her father, Emanuel Carrickford, No. 2,040 Fifth avenue, on the night of May 1st.

"The girl is eighteen years old, stands about five feet five inches high, and weighs one hundred pounds.

"Is a brunette, very clear complexion, with black eyes and hair, regular features and perfect teeth.

"Attired in a dark wine-colored dress, plainly trimmed, black coat trimmed with chenille fringe, black hat with ostrich plumes.

"The supposition is that the girl has been deceived from her home and foully dealt with.

"Any communication will be regarded as confidential, if the party furnishing it so desires, and the slightest information will be liberally rewarded.

"Apply to the above-named address or to the Superintendent of the Metropolitan Police at the Police Headquarters in Mulberry street."

Is it a wonder that such a placard should command attention even from the blasé New Yorkers, used to all sorts of sensations?

Besides, the topic was the talk of the town.

All the newspapers had been full of the mysterious affair, and the metropolis, which like a hungry animal seeks daily a fresh sensation upon which it may fatten, had devoured the details of the mysterious disappearance with great relish.

Not that mysterious disappearances are rare in the great city.

On the contrary, one can hardly pick up a daily newspaper without seeing one chronicled.

But in the majority of cases it is some obscure person who has dropped out of sight, and no one but those intimately connected with the absent one ever trouble their heads about the matter or even give it a second thought.

The police are notified.

The men in authority look wise, shake their heads, venture a remark that they "guess the party will turn up all right;" they'll "make a note of it," and, as far as they are concerned, this is generally the last of the matter.

If the missing party is a man these wise-heads assume that he has either absconded to avoid his creditors, or is off on a spree and in good time will return.

If he is a married man, how easy to suggest that he has found some lady whom he likes better than his own lawful spouse, and has fled, like a thief in the night, that he may be enabled to enjoy her society.

If the missing one be of the softer sex, the same insinuation will answer.

But, as a general thing, it is a man who is reported missing, seldom a woman.

In the case of this mysterious disappearance, though, the particulars were such that the whole city rung with the affair.

The missing girl was one of the belles of "swell" New York.

Her father, Emanuel Carrickford, was a great railroad king, a man who was supposed to be worth twenty millions of dollars at the least.

One of the best-known men in the country, and as the girl was his only child and his sole heir, it was but natural that her mysterious dis-

appearance should astound the people of the great metropolis and set half a million tongues wagging.

All the circumstances connected with the affair were as strange as strange could be.

The girl was young and beautiful, the idol of her father, to whom her slightest wish was as law, and yet, being of a sweet and amiable disposition, she was not a spoiled child.

This was odd, for there is hardly one girl out of a thousand who would not have been ruined in temper and disposition by such treatment as the beautiful Evangeline had received since her birth.

Although she was eighteen, she had not made her formal appearance in society, and therefore had no suitors, but there were at least a hundred of the gilded youths of upper-tendern looking anxiously forward to the time when they could have a chance to woo the daughter—and heiress—of the great railroad king.

So, as she had never received any young man's attentions, an elopement seemed out of the question, although of course, as in all such cases, there were plenty of gossips to suggest that some lowly young man, a waiter, or coachman, or something of that sort, had won the affections of the wealthy young girl, and knowing that her "pa" would never listen to any suggestion of such a match for his idol, had taken old Father Time by the forelock and persuaded her to fly with him.

But the detectives, who were called upon the moment the disappearance of the girl was discovered, although they had some such theory in their minds when they took hold of the case, were obliged to give it up, for not the slightest thing could they find to warrant them in retaining the supposition.

The circumstances of the girl's mysterious disappearance were extremely simple and afforded the bloodhounds of the law no ground to go upon at all.

She had retired to rest at her usual hour. Her maid, a lively, vivacious French girl, had attended her as was customary, but had been dismissed at the door of the girl's sleeping apartment; a proceeding not unfrequent, for the young lady sometimes preferred to wait upon herself.

The maid had bidden her mistress good-night and then had retired to her own room.

In the morning, at the usual hour, she had gone to assist Miss Evangeline to dress; finding the door locked, she had knocked, but as no answer was returned, she became alarmed, and thinking that perhaps her mistress might be ill, hastened to the railroad king, who was perusing the morning newspapers while waiting for his daughter to join him at breakfast.

He did not share in the girl's alarm, thinking it might be possible his daughter had overslept herself, and so went in person to arouse her.

But to his summons there was no answer, and as the door was both locked and bolted it finally had to be forced open.

Then the discovery was made that the girl was not in the room, neither had she occupied the bed on the previous night.

All the windows in the room were securely fastened, and there was not a single clew as to how the girl managed to pass from the apartment with the door locked and bolted and the casements fastened.

The father, appalled at the dark mystery connected with this unaccountable disappearance, gave orders to lock all the doors so that no one should leave the house, and then sent at once for the detectives.

They came in haste, eager to serve so great a man, made a searching investigation, but when it was over they were no wiser than at the beginning.

The girl had disappeared, and she had apparently dressed herself for the street, for her coat and hat were missing, and as her maid was certain she had put them in their accustomed places when her mistress returned from her drive in the afternoon, it seemed probable that Miss Evangeline had dressed herself and in some mysterious manner contrived to get out of the house without exciting observation, or she had been carried away—abducted, as the father firmly believed—for he could not conceive of any reason why his beloved child should fly from her home under cover of the night.

The detectives looked wise and nodded their heads as if they fully agreed with the railroad king, but in truth they were all astray and knew not what to think.

Then the father seized upon the brilliant idea of offering a large reward and flooding the country with posters, handbills and newspaper advertisements, although the detectives were averse to this, as they thought it wiser to keep the matter quiet, after their usual stupid fashion.

The father was obstinate and the scheme was put into operation.

And this is the story of the mystery.

In West street, near the Erie depot, one of the bills was posted, and among the rest a Chinaman stopped to gaze upon it.

A regular Mongolian "washerwoman," clad in the odd garb of the children of the far East. Slowly, with uplifted finger, he spelled out the

notice, and then placing his finger to the side of his flat nose he rubbed it up and down for a moment, while a grin, which extended almost from ear to ear, stole over his face.

"Me t'ink me catchee gal, alle samee 'Melican man!" he murmured, and then he closed his eyes and winked significantly at the placard staring down at him.

## CHAPTER II.

### ON THE TRAMP.

On the west bank of the Hudson river, opposite the upper end of the great metropolis of New York, commences a remarkable rock formation known as the Palisades.

Along the river's edge there is a narrow strip of rocky and uneven ground overgrown with small trees, scraggy bushes and wild vines; then, upright, as straight almost as the side of a house, rearing its crest toward heaven, goes a rocky ledge.

For miles and miles up the river the Palisades extend, with only a few small breaks here and there in the otherwise solid wall.

And so it happens that while the east bank of the river is thickly populated, the western shore, just across the stream, is a wilderness almost as great as when old Hendrick Hudson and his gallant Dutchmen for the first time sailed up the noble river.

The country back of the rocky wall for quite a distance is sterile and unprofitable, and not until the valley through which runs the Northern railway of New Jersey is reached, are there any settlements amounting to anything.

A stranger conveyed to this locality by some magic power, so that he could not possibly tell where he was, and asked to designate the spot, as he gazed around at the wilderness, betraying no signs of man's improving hand, would never suspect that he was only a few miles from the great metropolis of the New World.

So near, in fact, that by the aid of a good field-glass and a tall tree, the smoke of the city by day, and its lights by night can be clearly distinguished.

The country, in particular, between Closter Landing and the New York State line—and, in fact, until Sneden's Landing is reached, is extremely rugged.

There is a road from Closter depot to Tappan-town, running parallel with the river, and about two miles distant from it, and the tract of land lying between this road and the Hudson is about as wild a bit of country as can well be found this side of the Great North Woods.

Along this road, tramping northward from Closter station, in the pleasant afternoon time came an odd-looking figure.

It was a Chinaman habited in the dull-blue suit common to the race, with odd and clumsy wooden shoes and a broad-brimmed black felt hat, stuck on the back of his head so that the brim tilted upward at an angle of forty-five degrees.

In one hand he carried a small bundle done up in a red cotton handkerchief, and in the other a stout stick, cut from a wayside sapling, which the Mongolian was using to help him on his way.

The road was not a particularly well-traveled one, and not a soul did the wayfarer encounter after leaving Closter station.

He passed the old mill, then the school-house, and finally came to where the Norwood swamp extends toward the road.

Just at this point a small road bends off to the right, inclining a little toward the river, running in a northeastern direction.

We are really bestowing a title upon this path when we call it a road, not warranted by its appearance, for it was more like a cow-trail or a way to a wood-lot than a road.

When he came to the path the Chinese halted and studied the lay of the land attentively for a few moments; then he nodded his head, grinned in a knowing sort of way and struck off into the path.

Smaller and smaller grew the road, and wilder and more desolate the surroundings—but still the heathen pressed on.

After he had gone about a mile the path took an abrupt turn to the eastward, heading straight toward the river, which was now only a few hundred feet distant, but the growth of bushes and trees which fringed the top of the Palisades concealed the stream from sight.

And now a house appeared.

A rough, weather-beaten, two-storied frame dwelling, decidedly the worse for wear.

It had never been painted, quite a number of the panes of glass in the windows had been broken and their places supplied by old hats and rags stuffed in the openings.

There was a tumble-down sort of a barn in the rear of the house, and a forlorn-looking garden at one side, extending round to the back of the dwelling.

Two men sat on a couple of logs by a woodpile a little south of the house, and, with a butternut turned upside-down for a table, were amusing themselves at a game of cards.

A pair of hard-looking citizens the two were. One was tall and slim, the other short and stout.



The tall fellow had red hair, cropped tight to his head, and a scrubby beard of the same hue covered the lower part of his peaked, hatchet-like face.

This fellow was not unknown to the police of half a dozen large cities, and was on speaking-terms with some men of wide repute, chiefly judges of police and criminal courts and prosecuting attorneys.

Bill, the Conk, he was termed, the name bestowed upon him on account of the largeness of his nose, which was a regular "wind-splitter," to use the expression so common in the West.

Bill, the Conk, was one of the most notorious sneak-thieves in the country, an English importation, who had been obliged to come across the water on account of the old country getting too hot to hold him.

His companion was short and stout, as we have said, with a round, bull-dog-like face, a baboon jowl, and a neck so short that it seemed as if the head was set directly upon the shoulders.

His hair was perfectly gray, although he was not a man over forty, and from this circumstance, coupled with the fact that in his youth he had been a bright and shining light of the prize-ring—a boxer able to hold his own with any man of his weight in the world—he was known as Gray Slugger.

The gains of the pugilistic profession had not satisfied the Slugger, and he had gradually worked into the burglar's trade, and was reputed among good judges of that art—the detectives and the followers of the science themselves—to be as good a man as ever "cracked a crib" in America.

The Slugger was the first to catch sight of the Chinaman as he came shuffling up the narrow, uneven way with that peculiar walk common to the Mongolian race.

"I say, Conkey! Jist cast yer peepers down the road and spit out what wind blew that duffer up this way!" he exclaimed.

Conkey Bill turned to look in the direction indicated by his companion, and the Slugger, who happened to be dealing the cards just then, improved the opportunity to look at the cards which he was giving the other.

It was in such little "fine work" as this that the Slugger excelled.

"A Chinaman, or I'm a Dutchman!" Bill exclaimed, and then, turning to his companion, he continued:

"You had better shuffle up them keerds and try a fresh deal."

"I heard something that sounded mightily like the flip of paper, and I reckon you went in for to get a look at my hand when my head was turned."

It was this marvelous keenness of hearing that had brought the man to the front rank of his peculiar business.

He was always able to detect an approaching footfall quite a time before it became audible to ordinary ears.

"Why, Conkey, old man, you wouldn't go for to think I would be guilty of taking any little mean advantage of an old pard like you in that way?" the Slugger demanded, assuming an injured air, as if he felt really pained by the suspicion.

"You wouldn't do it, of course?"

"Nary time!"

"Of course not, if you didn't get a good chance," sneered the other.

"I wouldn't suspect you of any sich thing."

"No, you wouldn't suspect, 'cos you know blamed well that I would hop right into sich a racket in a minute."

"Let it go," and the Slugger picked up the cards and commenced to shuffle them again.

"But I say, 'bout this yere Chinaman; what on earth do you s'pose brought him up here?"

"Lost his way, I reckon."

By this time the new-comer was within hearing distance, and Bill, the Conk, hailed him:

"Hello, John!"

"How—how!" responded the Celestial, with a grin.

"What are you a-doing up in this region?"

"Me washee, washee," responded the other, as he came up and halted in front of the two, surveying the extremely dirty shirts that they wore in a melancholy manner, just as if he was anxious to give the pair a proof of his ability in his particular line on the spot.

"Oh, yes, I s'posed you was in the wash-woman business," Bill observed.

"But what are you doing up here—ain't you rather out of your way?"

"No, no, me know—me all light—me go Pielmont."

"Pielmont? where in thunder is that?" the Slugger exclaimed.

"Oh, you ain't got no brains in your noddle, nohow! It's Piermont he means!" Bill exclaimed.

"Yes, yes, Pielmont," added the Celestial, with another one of his expansive grins.

"W'ot are you going to do there?" the Slugger asked.

"Washee, washee," replied "John," with a smile that was childlike and bland, and then with his yellow, paw-like hands he went through

the motions pertaining to the exercise of the cleansing art.

"You're on the wrong tack; why didn't you keep to the main road, instead of turning into this cow-path?" demanded Bill.

"No *savey*," responded the Chinaman, rolling his eyes in a helpless sort of way.

"What do you mean by that heathen lingo?" cried the Slugger, suspiciously, always afraid of anything that he didn't understand.

"Don't worry the critter!" exclaimed Conkey Bill. "You ain't as well posted as you ought to be. If you had ever been in Californy, you would know that when a man says he don't *savey*, it means that he don't understand."

"Oh, is that it?"

The Celestial grinned and nodded in affirmation.

"W'ot I said was that you are on the wrong road; this here cow-path don't go nowhere, 'cept to the timber-slide into the river. You ought to have kept straight on and not turned off. You'll have to go back now."

"Yes, yes, go backee, all samee 'Melican man," and with more grins and nods the speaker turned upon his heel and commenced to retrace his steps.

"Say, we ought to have some fun with this washee, washee," Bill said, in a low, hurried tone, to his companion.

"What kind of fun can you get out of him?"

"Rope him into a game of cards; nearly all these Chinamen have money hidden about them, and we can skin him."

"Perhaps he might skin us," suggested the Slugger, who did not fancy the looks of the heathen.

"Oh, nonsense! Is it a go?"

"Well, all right if you say so."

"I'll call him, then; hello, John!"

The Chinaman turned and grinned as usual.

"W'ot wantee, hey?"

### CHAPTER III.

#### A LEETLE GAME.

"COME back and rest for a while; you've got a long walk afore you, and if you're thirsty, we've got a little good whisky here," Bill replied.

The alacrity with which the Celestial trotted back was wonderful.

"He understands whisky, anyhow," the Slugger remarked, in a grumbling tone.

"And what do you say to a sociable game of keerds, to pass the time away?" asked Conkey Bill.

"Me 'flaid me no *savey*," responded the heathen, but there was a wistful gleam in his eyes as he gazed upon the gay pasteboards.

"Oh, I guess you kin *savey* all right," Bill responded. "I never saw a John yet who didn't."

Then, a sudden idea occurring to the Slugger, he leaned forward and whispered in the ear of the other.

"Say, old man, is it safe to have this fellow fooling 'round here, seeing the leetle game that we are up to? S'pose this should be some cute trick on the part of the detectives to get on the track?"

"Oh, nonsense, who ever heard of a Chinese detective?" retorted Bill, in contempt.

"The fly cops are up to a trick or two, but the idea of using a real, genuine John to 'pipe' a cracksman off, is a touch beyond any of them."

Then, raising his voice, he addressed the Chinaman:

"Got any money, John, for we allers play for stamps, so as to make the thing interesting?"

"Me gottee two bits," responded the Celestial, producing a quarter from some mysterious pocket in his voluminous upper garment.

"Well, that will do to commence on, but I reckon that if you run afoul of a good hand, cully, you kin scare up more money than that."

"Me cathee good hand, me bettee high, all the samee 'Melican man," responded the other in his sing-song-like way.

"Help yourself to a log to sit on," suggested Conkey, and as the Chinaman obeyed, putting his bundle carefully between his feet as though it contained some extremely precious articles, Bill drew out a small flask of whisky and handed it to the Chinaman.

With glistening eyes the Celestial seized the bottle.

"Me likee 'Melican whisky—hoop-la!" and then, with one pull, he half-emptied the bottle.

"Hold on, hold on!" cried Bill in disgust. "Durn me if you ain't got as big a swallow as if you hadn't had a drink for a year!"

The Chinaman only grinned in reply, and cast a longing glance at the rest of the whisky in the flask as he handed the bottle back to Bill, who was indignant at the havoc that the other had made.

"Do you understand how to play poker?" the Slugger asked, as he shuffled the cards with the dexterity of a professional gambler.

"Yes, yes, me play pokel all the samee 'Melican man," the heathen replied.

"We're playing a leetle game, jist to pass the time away," Bill explained.

"We're playing at five cents ante, but there isn't any limit. If a man has got the keerds, the money, and the pluck to back it, he kin

'raise' the rest clean out of their boots, if so be as how it suits him to go the hull hog."

"All light!" responded the Chinaman with a nod.

By this time the two had become sufficiently accustomed to the peculiar dialect of the stranger to make out his meaning.

He spoke tolerably good English, but with the peculiarity of changing all his r's into l's.

When this was taken into account his meaning could be readily comprehended.

"But I say—w'ot's your name, anyhow?" the Slugger asked.

"Chin Chin."

"Well, that suits you first-rate, I reckon!" Bill exclaimed, with a laugh, "for from what I have seen of you I'd be willing to bet a trifle you kin do as much chinning as anybody that kin be scared up."

"Well, as I was a-going to say," observed the Slugger, "if you calculate to j'ine in a leetle game of poker, twenty-five cents ain't going to carry you far, even at so low a rate as five cents ante."

"Me guess me gottee more'n two bits," replied the Celestial with a knowing smile, and then from amid the folds of his garments—from some secret pocket, carefully hidden away—he produced a long, narrow canvas bag which was apparently well-filled with jingling coins.

"Me, Chin Chin, bullee boy—me gottee big wealth—heap money, bet you!"

And he shook the bag, causing the coins to dance together with a musical ring.

"Aha! you're well-fixed you yeller heathen!" Conkey Bill exclaimed. "And I'm jist the boy that kin skin you as clean as a whistle."

"Chin Chin b'lieve that when me see it," the other responded, sarcastically.

"W'ot are you a-going up to Piermont for, anyway?" asked the Slugger, who was inclined to be a little suspicious of the almond-eyed son of the East.

"Me washee, washee."

"Going to open a wash-house there?"

"Me washee, washee, for anodder Chinaman."

"Oh! you ain't the boss, then?"

"Me no boss."

Then the Slugger dealt the cards and the game proceeded.

Both the ex-pugilist and his companion were expert players, but not sufficiently skilled in handling the painted pasteboards to be enabled to come any "fine work" in the cheating line when opposed to such a card-sharp as the yellow-skinned Chinaman speedily proved to be.

For the first half-hour neither one of the three could boast of any particular success, but during the next thirty minutes the Chinese succeeded in capturing three large "pots," amounting to about fifty dollars, and from the peculiar way in which the Celestial played, the suspicion came to the white men that their opponent was cheating.

The Slugger ripped out a fearful oath as the Chinaman displayed his hand and raked in the last pile, grinning from ear to ear as he did so.

"I'm jist a-suspecting that you ain't a-playing fair!" he cried angrily, shaking his clinched fist as he spoke in the face of the grinning Chinaman.

"Cuss me if it don't look as if there was some gum-game in the business!" Conkey Bill howled, and he too shook his fist in menace at the Chinaman.

Bill was really more enraged than his companion, for he thought he had a sure thing, and had backed his hand liberally, lured onward by the cunning tricks of the Celestial.

Chin Chin had acted in such a manner as to convey the idea to the others that he was only "bluffing," that is, betting high on a weak hand for the purpose of scaring his opponents and "stealing a pot," as such an operation is termed by poker experts.

But when the show of cards was made it was found that he had an almost invincible hand, one upon which a man would be justified in betting almost any amount.

"Me play squalle every time, alle samee 'Melican man!" the Celestial protested, beginning to stow away his gains in the canvas bag as he spoke, as though he was afraid they might be taken from him by force of arms.

"You're a liar! you yaller skunk!" cried the Slugger, in a rage, his wrath excited by the jingle of the coins as they dropped into the bag and joined the Chinaman's hoard.

The speaker's anger had been increased by the fact that he had happened to put his hand in his pocket, and thereby made the discovery that he was nearly "broke."

With the exception of about a quarter in small change, the Chinese had cleaned him out.

His companion was in nearly the same condition.

In fact, so successful had been the stranger in his play that the two pals now couldn't have made up a dollar between them, although they had started in to play with a cash capital of about sixty.

"Me no lial—'Melican man lial!" retorted the Celestial, completing the operation of putting the coins in the bag, and then grabbing the top of it with a firm grip.



"Who do you call a liar, you miserable yaller hound?" yelled the Slugger, jumping to his feet, red with rage.

Conkey Bill followed his example, and the Chinaman, spry as a cat, was on his feet in an instant.

The Slugger made a grab for the canvas bag; the Celestial was on the lookout for just such a movement, and, with a quickness that was really wonderful, he swung the bag around, using it like a slung-shot, and hit the Slugger a whack on the head, the force of which caused him to see more stars than the heavens had ever displayed to his eyes, and the blow felled him to the ground all in a heap.

Conkey Bill, rushing forward to the assistance of his pal, received a similar blow, and although he threw up his arm in an attempt to ward it off, it was impossible to break the force of the stroke, and the blow of the novel weapon stretched him senseless by the side of his pal.

"Knock 'em out, one lound, alle samee 'Melican man!" chanted the visitor, as he looked upon the result of the contest.

#### CHAPTER IV. A HELPLESS PAIR.

THE victory had been won in the easiest manner.

Both of the ruffians had been "knocked out," and the operation performed so quickly that neither one was able to offer any resistance.

Now was the opportunity for the Chinaman to take to his heels and make his escape with his spoils.

But he didn't do anything of the sort.

On the contrary, the moment he had "settled" his men, from the mysterious pocket in the folds of his loose upper garment he produced a coil of strong cord, about half the size of a clothes-line and a wicked-looking pocket-knife which carried a single blade, shaped like the blade of a bowie-knife, fully five inches long.

The knife was so arranged that when the blade was opened a strong spring at the back prevented it from closing; thus while the knife could be easily carried in the pocket, yet it was almost as serviceable a weapon as a regular bowie-knife.

Hurrying to the side of the Slugger, who was lying as motionless as a log, the Chinaman wound the cord around his wrists and ankles, performing the job in the neatest and most expeditious manner possible; when it was finished and the Celestial hardly took as long to accomplish his task as we have occupied in describing it, the Slugger was as helpless as a turkey trussed for roasting, being incapable of moving hand or foot.

The ruffian secured, the victor turned his attention to the other.

His first movement upon producing the articles we have described was to cut off four pieces of the cord, each about five feet in length, and these cords he used to secure his prey.

A few seconds, and Bill, the Conk, was rendered as helpless as his companion.

The job accomplished, the Chinaman cast his eyes around him until they rested on the old barn.

"Vely good!" he exclaimed, a grin of satisfaction on his tawny face.

Approaching the Slugger he stooped, and raising the senseless form in his arms placed it upon his shoulder, betraying by the ease with which the feat was performed that he possessed almost superhuman strength, for no ordinary mortal could have handled the burly Englishman in such a manner.

In an obscure corner of the barn, upon a pile of hay, the Chinaman deposited his burden, and then returning, he picked up the Englishman's pal, and conveying him to the barn, placed him in another corner of the structure as remote from the other as possible.

By this time both of them were beginning to show signs of returning consciousness, but the Celestial never troubled his head about that.

After depositing the second ruffian in the barn he hurried to the old farm-house.

The door was not locked, so he had no difficulty in gaining entrance.

The interior of the house was sadly out of repair and the little furniture that was in the room looked extremely the worse for wear.

There were no carpets on the floors, and there was dust and dirt everywhere.

In fact, a more poverty-stricken abode could hardly be imagined.

There were only two rooms on the lower floor, one front and the other back.

The rear apartment was the kitchen, containing a small stove, cracked and dilapidated, evidently an old-timer who had encountered much wear and tear, some dishes and cooking utensils, a common table and some old chairs, more or less broken.

In the front room were only a couple of old cot bedsteads, with moth-eaten blankets tossed carelessly upon them, showing that it was used as a sleeping apartment.

The stolid, sleepy-looking Chinaman had skipped into the house with the agility of a lively flea; no one from his looks would have ever believed that he could betray so much activity.

First he examined the front room, then, with a shake of the head, as though he was in search of something and was disappointed because he did not discover it, he went into the kitchen.

A single glance sufficed to make him acquainted with all the room contained.

Again he shook his head, rushed to the closet in a corner of the room, the door of which stood invitingly open, as though asking for his inspection, and examined the scanty collection of food articles contained on the shelves.

There was a loaf of bread, a small plate of butter, a big hunk of cheese, and a plate of cold meat, with some few small articles.

Two canisters upon the lower shelf attracted the searcher's attention.

He grasped them eagerly.

The first one contained coffee.

"That is alle light!" he muttered. "Dlink coffee vely much, alle 'Melican man."

But when the lid was removed from the other canister, the familiar odor of the favorite plant of the Flowery Kingdom saluted his olfactories.

"He, he!" chuckled the Chinese, "'Melican gal dlink tea. 'Melican man chin-chin tea, nixy!"

"Alle light—she in house—hid—me find 'um, bully boy, big glass eye!"

And after this declaration the Chinaman ran up-stairs with great speed, but in the upper part of the house, which only consisted of a large open garret, nothing met his eyes excepting some old rubbish stowed away in one corner.

The dust which covered the floor of the apartment lay in one unbroken sheet, and as no footprints were visible it was plain that it had been some time since any one had disturbed the solitude of the garret.

"G. N., no good!" muttered the Celestial, evidently much disappointed.

And then a thought suddenly occurred to him.

"Cellar!" he cried, by which he meant cellar.

Down-stairs he raced again, and examined the lower floor, but could not discover any trace of a passage leading to a cellar.

He passed out of the rear door which led from the kitchen into the back yard, thinking that the entrance to the cellar must be from the outside, but he was doomed to be disappointed in his search, for not only did he fail to discover the entrance which he sought, but as far as he could see there wasn't any cellar to the house.

"No cellar!" he exclaimed, in huge disgust, as he made a circuit of the building.

And it certainly seemed as if such was the case.

The building squatted right on the ground, a few large, flat stones being placed at the corners to support the sills, and there seemed to be hardly room for a cat to make its way under the house.

For a few moments the earnest investigator paused in perplexity, and then, as a new idea seemed to flash across his brain, his face lighted up, he wagged his head complacently and turned his steps toward the barn where he had bestowed the knocked-out ruffians.

He approached the building with the utmost caution, stealing along as noiselessly as a cat creeping upon its prey.

It was plain he anticipated that the two men would have recovered their senses by this time, and he did not wish them to suspect that he was near.

His surmise was correct; the ruffians were just becoming sensible when the Celestial stole up within listening distance.

The Slugger, having much the hardest head of the two, besides being more accustomed from the experience of his early life to hard knocks, was the first to recover.

"Hallo, hallo!" he muttered, as he woke to consciousness, "w'ot in blazes does this 'ere mean?"

He was gazing about in semi-darkness, unable as yet to exactly understand what had taken place.

Then slowly his memory served him, and he comprehended what had occurred.

"It's that cursed Chinaman!" he exclaimed.

"The yallow brute! He hit me a lick in the head with his bag of money and laid me out."

Then he essayed to rise and found he was unable to move.

The pressure of the tightly drawn cords upon his hands and wrists had produced a sensation of course, but in his bewildered state the Slugger had not discovered that he was bound hand and foot, but had ascribed the odd feeling to the influence of the heavy blow he had received.

His astonishment now, when he ascertained that he was so tightly pinioned that it was impossible for him to move his limbs, can readily be imagined.

"W'ot in blazes does this mean?" he exclaimed, in amazement.

"Why, I'm tied—tied up with cords so that I can't help myself. The brute of a Chinaman must have done it. W'ot was he up to? Has he gone through me and cleaned me out? Mighty little had I to lose, for the yaller beast took 'bout all I had with the cards."

"And Conkey!" he exclaimed, as a thought of his partner flashed suddenly across his mind, "w'ot has become of him?"

A low groan from the other corner of the barn new broke upon the air.

Conkey Bill's senses were just coming back to him.

The two men were only some fifteen feet apart, but as there was a board partition between them it was impossible for them to see each other.

"Hallo, hallo, can that be him?" the Slugger muttered. "Did the yaller heathen knock him out, too?"

"I reckon he did, for if he was man enough to walk over me, a chap like Conkey wouldn't stand much show for his money."

"Blazes! I can't move!" complained the other ruffian, who had striven to rise and found himself unable to do so, and was at a loss to understand what was the matter, not having as yet recovered full possession of his senses.

"Hallo, Conkey?" the Slugger cried.

"Hallo, Slugger, where are you?"

"Right over 'ere, and all tied up."

"So am I!" exclaimed Bill, suddenly awakening to the facts in the case. "And that durned Chinaman, where is he?"

#### CHAPTER V.

##### THE CELESTIAL'S GAME.

THERE was silence for a moment. The conundrum that Conkey Bill had propounded was too much for the other to answer.

"Yes, sir, that is what I want to know!" Conkey Bill exclaimed, finding that the Slugger was not good on the conundrum question.

"Where is that cussed Chinaman? The yaller scoundrel hit me in the head with his canvas bag, and the lick laid me out jest as if it had been a sand-club."

"That is the way he served me!" growled the Slugger.

"Yes, I know that. I saw him hit you a clip which laid you out as if you had been struck by lightning, and I jumped to git even with the heathen, but he was too quick for me and I got a lick worse even than the one you caught."

"Hang me if I ever knew one of these blasted yaller dogs to show fight afore!" growled the Slugger, sulkily.

"It's a mighty strange thing, I tell yer," remarked the other, in a reflective sort of way.

"Arter the cuss laid us out he must have tied these here cords around our arms and legs. Why, I'm as helpless as a babby!"

"So am I; I kin roll over, I think, but that is about all I kin do."

"Kin you manage to get your mouth to the cords on your wrists?" Conkey Bill asked. "By chewin' on 'em you might be able to part 'em in time."

"No chance to work that trick," replied the Slugger. "The miserable cuss has fastened the cord so that I can't move my arms at all."

"Same way he has served me."

"Say, w'ot's his little game?"

"Durn me if I know, but I reckon the yaller cuss must be up to something or else he wouldn't have taken the trouble to tie us up in this way."

"Mebbe he thought we might foller him, and he tied us up so as to get a good start."

"I don't really think he would take the trouble to do it unless he had some better reason," Conkey Bill remarked, slowly.

"He had laid us both out and it stands to reason that we wouldn't be very quick to git on his track, and then how could we tell in w'ot direction he had gone, for of course he wouldn't be fool enough to keep to the road, but would take to the woods?"

"No, no, my opinion is that we have been played for a couple of suckers, and mighty well played, too."

"You think that the Chinese cove was up to some gum-game?" exclaimed the Slugger, in astonishment.

"You kin bet your boots on it!" Bill replied, decidedly.

"We've been shadowed, and the yaller heathen didn't lose his way at all, but he came in this direction jist on purpose to run afoul of us."

"Well, all I've got to say is that a better trick I never heerd on!" the Slugger exclaimed.

"You bet! it worked to a charm and we were fooled without any trouble at all, and now while we are in a hole here the scoundrel is probably a-going through the shanty."

"W'ot for?" demanded the Slugger, who was somewhat dull of comprehension.

"Why, he's arter something valuable of course, something that he won't find in the shanty, so he'll only have his trouble for his pains."

"Say, Conkey, do you think that the Chinaman is a detective in disguise?"

"That is the way the thing looks to me."

"And ain't he a real Chinaman?"

"I reckon not."

"Well, if he ain't a Chinaman, all I've got to say is that I never ran across sich a good fake in my life."

"You're right there," Conkey Bill remarked. "It's jest a splendid git-up, and the cuss is a credit to the profession."

"I reckon he must be some new man for I don't know any of the old ones who would be able to git himself up in sich a way, but for all his smartness he won't take the trick this time,



for I defy all the fly cops in New York to nose around the shanty and succeed in gitting on the right track."

"That's so; the thing is too well-worked. But I say, Bill, w'ot are we going to do?"

"Why, you duffer, w'ot kin we do but grin and bear it until the captain comes?"

"Then we kin yell, and the Cap will take us out of this nasty hole."

"But when will the captain be along?"

"There's no telling," was Conkey Bill's rather ambiguous reply.

"Mebbe not until to-morrow."

"Mebbe not," responded Bill, who was accepting the situation in the most philosophical manner.

"Blazes!" growled the Slugger, "two or three hours of this sort of thing will make my legs and arms so stiff that I won't be able to use 'em for a week."

"I shouldn't wonder; and Slugger, old pal, let this be a warning to you not to let any John Chinaman git away with you ag'in."

"Curse his yeller skin!" exclaimed the other, in rising wrath. "If I ever run afoul of him ag'in durn me if I don't put a hole in him!"

"Well, I reckon I will do my best to git square with him for this night's work," Conkey Bill remarked.

"The captain too must chip in with us, for if we hadn't been put on duty 'ere, this 'ere thing wouldn't happened."

"The captain, you know, is hand and glove with all the big-bugs, 'beaks,' and cops, and he'll be able to find out who this Chinaman is and fix some trick to down him jist as he did with the last fly cop that got arter and was making it pretty hot for the gang."

"Hush!" warned Bill, the Conk, "be keerful w'ot you say. Don't go to letting out any of the secrets of the business. There may be somebody a-prowling 'round for all you know."

The listener without had not allowed a word of the conversation to escape him, and although he was half-inclined to still play the eavesdropper, thinking that the ruffians might be foolish enough to let fall some important information, yet when he reflected that some of the gang to which the two men belonged were liable to make their appearance at any moment he saw that it would not be prudent to waste any time, so he walked noiselessly into the barn, and before Conkey Bill comprehended that an intruder was near he knelt by his side and, without warning, thrust a flat-shaped rubber gag into his mouth and fastened it securely despite the attempt of the assailed ruffian to struggle against the assault.

So adroitly was this gagging process performed that Bill was not able to utter a cry, although he writhed in rage; about the only thing he could do.

The Slugger heard the noise made by Bill's contortions, and inquired as to what he was about.

"Say, old pal, w'ot are you a-doing—trying to get rid of the blamed cords?"

"I'd like to take a turn at that myself, but I might as well be in my coffin, for all I kin do."

The words came distinctly enough to the ears of the ruffian, but he did not answer, for the best of reasons.

If his life had been at stake he could not have uttered a word.

Raising the helpless man in his arms the Celestial stole noiselessly out of the barn, leaving the Slugger to wonder at the silence which had suddenly fallen upon his companion—a silence for which he was utterly unable to account, the Chinese having performed his work so adroitly that the burly Englishman had not the slightest suspicion of what had transpired, or, in fact, that any one had been in the barn.

Straight to the house the Chinaman went with his burden, and deposited the man on one of the cots in the front room.

Bill all the while gazing at his captor with wondering eyes, for he had not the remotest idea of what the other was up to, although he anticipated that mischief was meant.

After placing the man on the bed, Chin Chin proceeded to remove the gag which he had placed in Conkey Bill's mouth.

The moment he had recovered the use of his tongue Bill made haste to speak.

"What in blazes are you up to, any way?" he demanded.

"Nice 'Melican man," observed the Chinese, with one of his customary grins.

"Oh, yes, I'm jest as nice as they make 'em!" Conkey Bill remarked.

"But I'd like to know w'ot little racket you're trying to play."

"You catchee on pletty soon," responded the other, still grinning, and then he began to remove the shoes Conkey Bill wore.

"Hallo, w'ot are you 'bout?"

"Chin Chin catchee fun with 'Melican man."

"Fun!" cried Conkey Bill, in amazement.

"Yes, yes, me know. Say John Chinaman catchee gal, eh?"

"Catch gal?" repeated the ruffian, and a peculiar expression came over his features.

"Yes, you know, nice gal—one t'ousand dollee leward, hey?"

The cold sweat came out on the temples of the

ruffian, for he now realized the nature of the trap into which he had fallen.

"Oho, you are a detective in disguise?"

"Me Chin Chin, Chinaman," replied the Celestial, in sing-song tones.

"Oh, w'ot is the use of trying to play that racket on me any longer?" exclaimed Conkey Bill, in disgust.

"You're a detective officer, I understand that well enough; you've played a big game and got me in a hole, but I reckon it won't do you much good."

"'Melican man tell Chin Chin 'bout leetle gal—Chinaman catchee gal—catchee t'ousand dollee; hoop-la!"

"I reckon you won't get nothing out of me 'bout the gal!" growled Bill, defiantly.

"I saw the bills posted up in the city telling 'bout the missing gal and offering a thousand dollars reward for her recovery, but that's all I know 'bout it."

"Chinaman catchee fun with 'Melican man, mebbe 'Melican man chin chin, eh?"

And then the Celestial removed Bill's stockings in addition to the shoes.

#### CHAPTER VI.

##### PUT TO THE TORTURE.

"You durned yaller hound! w'ot are you up to?" cried Bill, unable to guess what plan the other had in his mind, but at the same time terribly apprehensive of evil, for, despite the grin upon the face of the Celestial and his pleasant, purring, cat-like way, the ruffian felt sure that some terrible mischief was intended.

"Chin Chin catchee fun alle time—make 'Melican man laugh till him shake like jellee."

And as he spoke the Chinese drew a long cord from the same secret pocket which had held the other cord—said pocket being apparently as inexhaustible as the magic bag of the magician—and with this cord he secured Conkey Bill firmly to the cot so that it was impossible for him to turn over or to move his feet from the position in which they were placed.

On the cot was a common straw mattress which had evidently seen long service and was much the worse for wear, being badly torn here and there.

After having secured his prisoner the Chinaman drew out a stiff straw from one of the protruding bunches, and breaking off about six inches of it, flourished the straw in the air in high glee.

"Hoop-la, me John 'Melican man!" he sung, and then he drew the end of the straw delicately up and down on the horny sole of Conkey Bill's right foot.

The ruffian gave vent to a loud howl, although the sensation was far from being unpleasant, but he had heard of this outlandish sort of torture before, and understood what was in store for him.

The tickling sensation soon turned to agony of the most fearful kind, and the ruffian, being a craven at heart, was appalled at the prospect before him.

"For the love of Heaven, man, have mercy on me!" Conkey Bill cried, as the Chinese, in the most playful manner possible, drew the straw up and down on the soles of the feet.

"You tellee me how catchee gal, me stop," responded the other, but never ceasing for a moment to touch the straw to the flesh.

The agony was intense, and only a man of iron-like nature could have endured it.

First Bill swore, and then he prayed, but his tormentor never took the least notice of either, but continued to industriously work the straw.

"Oh, I shall go crazy!" yelled the ruffian, at last, unable to bear the torture.

"For Heaven's sake stop a moment and give me a chance to breathe."

"Let me know w'ot you want and I'll do any thing I can for you."

"Me want catchee gal," replied Chin Chin, ceasing from the tickling process.

"Evangeline Carrickford?"

"Yes, yes, t'ousand dollee me catchee when me catchee gal."

"The captain will murder me if he ever finds out I put you on the lay."

"Captain? Who captain? Mebbe me like catchee captain too," the Chinaman observed.

"Captain Pelican he calls himself, and that is all I know about him, honor bright!"

"You see I'm a new member of the gang, and I ain't been trusted with any of the secrets of the band yet."

"Mebbe odder 'Melican man he know how catchee captain," the Celestial remarked, nodding his head in the direction of the barn, and evidently meaning the Slugger.

"No, he's a new man too and jest joined with me. We were put on trial in this racket, and if the thing panned out well we were to have a go at some bigger job."

"You see our racket was to look arter the gal, see that she was fed and didn't get away. It was an easy thing, but you have smashed it all to blazes!"

"Me like catchee gal—how?"

The ruffian understood that this was an inquiry in regard to the whereabouts of the missing lady, and though he was extremely reluctant to betray the secret, yet, as he was in the

toils, he saw no way out of it, for from the little experience he had had of his captor, he felt certain the Chinaman would not have hesitated to tickle him to death.

Life was sweet; there was a chance that his agency in the matter might not be discovered, and so he resolved to betray the secret.

"If I make a clean breast of it, will you promise not to let on to anybody that it was a chap 'bout my size who gave the racket away?"

"Yes, yes, me no tell, me no chin chin—like oystal."

"Dumb as an oyster, eh?" muttered the ruffian. "Well, that is about what I want, so I'll spit out the truth."

"At the back of the garden patch in the rear of the house there is a small path which leads through the trees and bushes up on the hill-side."

"You'll have to look pretty sharp to find it, for it ain't used much, and the grass and weeds have pretty nearly wiped it out."

"But it's there, all the same, if you are keen enough to find it."

"Me find um—no affraid of that!" asserted the Celestial, confidently.

"Well, arter you find the path jist foller yer nose, and 'bout a quarter of a mile up in the brush you'll run across a ledge of rocks, and in them rocks is a good-sized cave."

"A durned crazy fool, who used for to own this place got the idee into his head that there was gold into them rocks, and he jest wades into 'em with pick and shovel and blasting-powder for over five years, and I s'pose he would have kept it up to this blessed day if he hadn't up and died."

"He boarded up the front of the cave and fixed a door to it and used for to live there 'bout all the time, for fear some one might come and steal some of the precious stuff from him."

"The gal is in there, but I ain't got the key to the door. The captain carries that himself."

"How gal catchee food, eh?" asked the Chinaman, who was evidently a little incredulous in regard to this part of the story.

"Everything is lowered down to her through a hole in the top of the cave which the old crazy miner fixed for a chimney."

"Oh, I'm giving it to you as straight as a string, and no mistake!" the ruffian asserted.

"S'pose you fool John Chinaman, you catchee what me do?"

And as he put the question, the Celestial drew a long slender knife from his breast and drew it lightly across the throat of the prostrate man.

Conkey Bill shivered in agony as he felt the cold edge of the keen steel, and for a moment he fancied his throat was cut.

"For Heaven's sake, don't murder me in cold blood!" he exclaimed.

"I'm telling you the truth, upon my soul, I am!"

"Alle light, me see—no catchee gal, knife catchee you."

And then replacing the weapon in his breast, the Chinaman glided from the room.

He well understood the necessity that there was for haste; from the conversation between the two men in the barn which he had overheard without their knowledge, he knew that there was a probability that the leader of the marauding gang, who bore the peculiar title of Captain Pelican, might arrive at any moment.

And if, as was likely, he should be accompanied by any members of the band, they would be apt to make it particularly warm for him.

So he proceeded to execute the task which he had taken upon himself with all possible expedition.

Of course there was a chance that the captured ruffian was lying and that he had been sent upon a fool's errand, but while realizing this, he did not think that it was probable.

He had faith that the man had spoken the truth, for he judged that under the circumstances it would have required more pluck than he believed the fellow to possess to hatch a lie with death staring him in the face.

As the Chinaman passed out of the house he noticed an old ax lying at the back door and this he immediately seized upon.

In his opinion it would be an extremely handy instrument to break in the locked door of which the ruffian had spoken.

This almond-eyed adventurer had the orbs of a hawk, and it did not take him long to discover the old "blind" path, which was exactly as Conkey Bill had represented.

Along through the bushes the Chinaman hurried; he was evidently a practiced woodman, for he followed the path without the least difficulty, and at last arrived at the ledge of rocks in which the cave was situated and to which entrance was denied by a wooden barricade of extremely solid construction.

In the center of the barricade was a small door, and this was, if anything, more strongly constructed than the rest of the woodwork.

The adventurer tried the door.

It was firmly fastened, and when he tested his strength against it he could not shake it in the least.

"Me catchee him, vely quick!" he exclaimed, as he grasped the ax with firm determination, and then, with the skill and strength of an ex-



perienced wood-chopper, hurled a tempest of heavy blows against the door.

The barricade had been built to stand a siege, but it was not in the power of the materials of which it was composed to withstand such an assault as this.

The door splintered under the shock of the heavy blows, and a dozen vigorous strokes beat in the upper part of one of the boards.

The attacker had expected to see a female head appear in the opening, for he naturally fancied that the fair captive, attracted by the sound of the assault upon the door, would rush eagerly forward, anticipating that help was at hand.

But there was no sign of human presence within the cave, and though the rescuer still kept up his attack upon the door, yet it was with the suspicion that the ruffian who had given him the information had played him false and that there was no captive in the cave.

But when the door was beaten in so as to afford him an entrance, he comprehended why the imprisoned girl had not made her appearance.

There was an inner wall to the cave, and an inner door, apparently as tightly secured as the outer one. Chin Chin immediately advanced to attack this new obstacle.

## CHAPTER VII.

### AN UNEXPECTED EVENT.

THE mad recluse who had planned this peculiar stronghold had done his best to fortify himself against the enemies who in his madness he supposed to be lurking near ready to pounce upon him the moment he discovered the treasure which he so fondly believed to be located in the heart of the rock.

A dozen ringing blows beat in the door, and there, sure enough, stood a pale-faced girl, trembling with excitement.

She could be distinguished as she stood with clasped hands by the side of a table, having evidently arisen from a low rocking-chair near at hand.

The only light that penetrated into the cave came in through the two broken doors, and the place was in semi-darkness.

"Oh, sir, have you come to rescue me from this dreadful situation?" she exclaimed.

Even in the semi-darkness it was apparent that she was an extremely beautiful girl, a brunette with classically-cut features, delicate and aristocratic, and the most beautiful black hair and eyes.

"Yes, yes, that is the kind of a grasshopper me is!" the Chinese exclaimed, bursting in the door with a tremendous stroke.

Over went the door on the rock with an awful bang, and the maiden, with a joyful cry, was about to rush from her prison-house when, through the outer door of the cave, came half a dozen dark forms, and immediately precipitated themselves upon the Chinaman.

Although taken completely by surprise yet he made a gallant fight.

Overpowered by the weight of numbers he was borne, struggling desperately, to the floor, while from the lips of the maiden came shrill screams of horror as she gazed upon the conflict.

Although the odds were six to one against him, yet the wonderful strength and skill of the assailed man enabled him to make a stubborn resistance, and for a few moments it looked as if he would get the best of the fight, for there were so many of the assailants that they were in each other's way and were not able to get at the Chinaman as effectually as they ought to have done.

But the leader of the gang who had commanded his men to seize the Chinaman as they all came rushing through the doorway, had refrained from taking an active part in the assault himself, and when he saw that the Celestial was not only successfully defending himself, but bid fair to get the best of the fight, he came to the assistance of his satellites.

Drawing a heavy revolver from beneath his coat, he watched his opportunity, and when a favorable chance came, he dealt the Chinaman a terrible blow with the butt of the weapon upon the head.

The stroke, delivered almost with force enough to fell an ox, stretched the almond-eyed son of the East out insensible.

And when she beheld her champion thus cruelly treated, with a final scream of horror, believing him to be murdered, the girl fainted dead away.

There were seven men all told in the attacking party, six besides the chief, who had dealt the finishing stroke to poor Chin Chin.

Conkey Bill and the Slugger were in the group, and the other four were ruffians of about the same kidney.

Ugly, beetle-browed, short-haired scoundrels, whom any honest man would have avoided instinctively, for the word rogue was indelibly written on each man's face.

The leader was quite a contrast to the rest, for he was a medium-sized fellow, well-dressed, and with a gentlemanly appearance, but a very red face, what little could be seen of it, for his iron-gray hair was long and bushy, curling in little crispy ringlets all over his head, and a

beard of the same hue, short but dense, covered the better part of his face.

Evidently this was the Captain Pelican of whom the two ruffians had spoken.

There wasn't one of the assailants who did not bear marks showing how desperate had been the struggle ending in the overthrow of the Chinese.

The Slugger had received a wicked smash on the nose, a blow almost powerful enough to spread his "bugle" all over his face, as he expressed it.

Bill, the Conk, had been unlucky enough to catch a violent blow in the stomach, and was now almost doubled up with pain.

And the rest could show as fine a display of black eyes and bloody noses as any one would wish to see.

"Bind the fellow, hand and foot!" exclaimed the captain, in a strong, commanding voice.

The ruffians performed this job with an expedition that plainly showed it was work to which they were not unaccustomed.

"Tiger Jack and Scrawny Pete, take the girl to the house, shut her up in the front room and guard her carefully until I come."

The two of the gang thus oddly designated—the first a medium-sized, but muscular fellow, spry as a cat, and the second a tall, lanky individual—immediately proceeded to carry the order into effect.

When they disappeared with their burden, the captain spoke again:

"Prop this fellow up against the wall so that I can have a talk with him when he recovers the use of his senses, and then all of you make yourselves scarce," he said.

"It is important for the safety of all of us that I find out who and what this fellow is, for he is the first man that ever succeeded in tracking us, and if the secret is known to anybody else, the quicker we get out of here, bag and baggage, the better it will be for our health."

"That's so, for the cuss may have a hull squad of detectives at his heels," the Slugger observed.

"There is great danger that such may be the case," the captain replied.

"And it would be as well, Slugger, for you and Conkey to skirmish down the road a little ways, so as to be on the watch."

"It won't do for us to be surprised, you know, for in that case the detectives would stand a chance of running us all in."

"Oh, I'll keep my peepers open!" the Slugger declared. "And from the hill, a quarter of a mile down the road, I kin git a view of the hull country clear up to the station."

"Conkey you take a look down along the river," said the captain.

"It may be that the cops are playing sharp, and intend to get at us by means of boats."

"It would be a mighty hard climb up the bank," Conkey Bill remarked.

"It is almost as steep as the side of a house."

"It has been scaled," the captain remarked, "and what men have done can be done again, so keep your eyes open in that direction."

"If the detectives do attempt to climb up the bank, and we find it out in time, by rolling stones down on their heads we can make it pretty hot for them."

"Be off with you now, so as to give me a chance at this fellow, as I see his senses are coming back to him."

The gang obeyed the command, and when the last one vanished through the open doorway, the bandit captain helped himself to a chair and sat down facing the bound and helpless Chinaman.

Attentively he studied the face of the Celestial.

"I do not recognize the fellow, although I feel sure I am tolerably well acquainted with the physiognomy of all the detectives in the country who amount to anything," he remarked, reflectively.

"This may be some new man who has come up, and if he is, the quicker he is put out of the way the better, for it requires no prophet to foretell that any detective who can play the racket as well as this fellow has, will be pretty certain in the long run to get the game he goes after."

"What a capital disguise," he continued, as he closely examined the dusky face of the senseless man.

"The color is perfection, and nature having gifted him with a rather flat nose and high cheek-bones, the representation of a Chinaman is perfect."

"I believe this fellow, if he could speak the language could travel all through China itself without being detected."

"But now the principal point is to ascertain, if I can, exactly what the fellow knows, or suspects, and then I can judge how great is the danger."

"It may be possible that he has just stumbled upon this place by accident, but I hardly think that is the truth."

"I am more inclined to believe that his appearance here is due to a deep-laid plan."

"If this is true, and the police authorities are in possession of our secrets, why then the quicker we all seek safety in flight the better."

At this point the musings of Captain Pelican were put an end to by the Chinaman opening

his eyes, while a deep-drawn sigh escaped from his lips.

He had recovered his consciousness.

"Well, young man, you are in a pretty bad fix," the captain remarked.

The Celestial only grinned, and his eyes wandered listlessly around the cave.

"In the language of the ancients, you came for wool and got shorn."

The other shook his head.

"No wantee 'Melican man's woolee," he replied.

"Enough of this nonsense!" cried Captain Pelican, impatiently.

"Don't try and play me for a flat; that game won't work."

"Chinaman no playee game—Chinaman washee, washee."

"Bah!" exclaimed the other, angrily, "give over this foolishness; it won't do you the least bit of good!"

"You are in the toils, and there is not the least chance for you to escape unless I choose to have mercy on you."

"Me good, vely good Chinaman," pleaded the yellow-faced fellow, with a far-away look in his eyes.

"You are a detective in disguise. Own up to the truth and tell me your name, or I'll put this knife into your heart!" and with the words the captain pressed the point of an eight-inch bowie-knife against the breast of the captive.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A CROSS-EXAMINATION.

AN expression of the utmost terror appeared upon the face of the Chinaman and he rolled his eyes wildly.

"No savey—no savey, 'Melican man!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, don't try to play any of your California lingo upon me!" the bandit captain replied.

He evidently was a man who had traveled, and he comprehended what the heathen meant by his odd expression.

"You savey me well enough; you know what I mean. I'll give you a minute to think the matter over, and then, if you don't make a clean breast of it, I'll drive this steel clean through your heart."

"Chinaman no tellee what Chinaman no know," the other responded.

The bandit captain was so irritated by the denial that he pressed the knife through the clothes of the Celestial until the point grazed the skin.

And the moment the captive felt the scratch of the cold steel he set up a howl of alarm.

"No killee Chinaman—Chinaman come top side hill—gittee gal—makee t'ousand dollee!"

"Aha, you know that there is a reward of a thousand dollars offered for her recovery?"

"Chinaman lead 'Melican's chin-chin bettel he speakee."

"You can read better than you can speak?"

"Yes, yes, me go Sunda'-school."

The bandit captain was staggered.

Was this then a real genuine Chinese after all, and not a detective in disguise?

The bills offering a reward of a thousand dollars for the discovery of the girl had been posted on every dead wall in the city and for fifty miles around, and smaller ones sent in all directions broadcast over the country.

The bills contained such an accurate description of the girl that any one familiar with the placards would be apt to recognize the lady on sight.

Was it possible that this Chinaman, wandering through the country, came across one of the bills, and his greed of gain being excited had led him to endeavor to win the rich reward?

But how had he managed to strike the trail? How had he discovered where the girl was secreted, and what accident had led him to search for the girl in this lonely and unfrequented region?

The explanation of how it chanced that the Pelican captain and his gang had arrived so timely upon the scene can be briefly given.

As the two captured men had remarked during their conversation in the barn, when the Chinaman had played the eavesdropper, the captain might be expected at any time.

And it happened that, with four of his men, he had arrived only a few minutes after the Celestial had departed to visit the cave for the purpose of releasing the girl.

Discovering the plight of the ruffians, he had lost no time in releasing them, and being made acquainted by them with all that had occurred during his absence, he had set out to apprehend the intruder who had taken it upon himself to play so bold a game.

It did not seem possible that this daring adventurer could be a real Chinaman, for in all his experience—and this outlaw captain was a man who had seen a deal of life in his time—he had never come across a Celestial who had displayed any particular abilities in the fighting line.

True, he had heard of Chinese desperadoes, and the records of the far East, the home of these almond-eyed, pig-tailed men, were full of



dark pages whereon was written the details of the crimes committed by the desperate, blood-thirsty Chinese pirates.

But as a rule few of these yellow warriors ever find their way to this country, for, like a cat in a strange garret, they are out of their element in a foreign land.

And the desperado captain too flattered himself that he was a good judge of human nature, and this fellow did not at all appear to him to be one of these bloody-minded Chinese outlaws.

In fact he did not believe that he was a Chinaman at all, for there was something about his face that did not appear to suit with the Mongolian race.

No, no, it was a clever disguise, but he was not to be deceived by it.

The Chinaman was a detective in disguise, a new man and a smart one; but, thanks to the chance of fortune, not able to succeed in the desperate undertaking upon which he had so freely embarked.

"Oh, come, there isn't any use for you to attempt to pull the wool over my eyes!" the captain exclaimed.

"I'm up to your game and it won't work. You are no Chinaman; you are a detective in disguise and you might as well make a clean breast of it."

"Me no *savey*," responded the prisoner while an expression of amazement appeared upon his stolid features.

"You know what I mean well enough and this pretended ignorance will not serve you. You have ventured into the lion's den and if you get scratched you have no one to blame but yourself."

"Me try catchee gal, so catchee t'ousand dollee," responded the Celestial with a sickly grin.

"No more of this fooling!" exclaimed the outlaw leader, impatiently.

"Drop your mask; it will no longer serve your turn to wear it. I want some information from you and if you value your life you had better give it."

"Me chin chin alle time," protested the other. The brows of the captain contracted and his face grew dark.

The persistency of the captive in sticking to his assumed character annoyed the desperado.

"You idiot! you don't seem to understand that you are playing with your life!" he exclaimed. "Can't you understand that you are in a trap, helpless, at my mercy? Your life is not worth the flip of a copper coin; you have succeeded in penetrating into the stronghold of a band of men who would as soon kill as look at you."

"Now I will give you one last chance."

"I am satisfied that you are a detective; I thought I knew about every man in the country in that line who amounted to anything, but you are a stranger to me, and I am curious to know who you are and where you come from."

"I am also puzzled in regard to your getting upon the scent of the girl so quickly, and I would like to learn from you how you managed to accomplish the feat."

"You need not hesitate to speak, and I can tell you that if you make yourself agreeable, this may be the best day's business you have ever done in your life."

There was an expression upon the face of the other which seemed to say that he did not exactly understand how this could be, and so the captain hastened to explain.

"Perhaps you think I am trying to stuff you with some yarns that won't hold water, but that ain't so."

"I give you my word, old man, I'm giving it to you as straight as a string."

"I suppose by this time you understand pretty well that you are talking to the captain of a pretty well-organized band."

"We levy toll upon the world at large, and divide our gains, and so far we have done remarkably well."

"This is no common band of ruffians, I want you to understand, but a first-class organization, and in our ranks we number not only expert cracksmen and A No. 1 men of all descriptions who are on the cross, but also lawyers, detectives, merchants and judges, so that if one of the band happens to get into difficulties there are always plenty of friends near at hand to help him out."

"Now then, how would you like to become a member of the organization?"

"A man of your ability would be valuable to us, and we could make it profitable to you."

"What do you say?"

"Yes, yes; me b'long—me do washee washee for glang, too."

And the Chinaman grinned while the outlaw leader looked disgusted.

#### CHAPTER IX.

##### THE RUFFIAN BAFFLED.

It was a trap, of course, that he had laid for the intruder, and he fancied that the other would immediately fall into it.

He had not the least intention of sparing the life of a man who had proved himself to be so de-

termined and desperate a foe, unless, indeed, he became satisfied that he could make good use of him enrolled in the band.

But on this point he was doubtful.

The man already knew too much; he had discovered that the girl was in his hands, and the bandit captain doubted whether he could offer inducements enough to make the detective keep the secret.

He knew well enough that the railroad king would gladly give an enormous sum to recover possession of his child.

What was ten or twenty thousand dollars to a man worth twenty millions?

And then, too, Emanuel Carrickford was well known to be a proud and overbearing man, one who, flushed with success, was not accustomed to being defeated, and would spend money like water rather than submit to such a thing.

And if he chanced to discover that his daughter had been foully dealt with he was just the kind of man to spend ten thousand dollars for the purpose of obtaining revenge.

There was no doubt that the railroad king would spend more money to punish the bold scoundrels who had dared to abduct his child than he would be willing to give for her ransom, provided that he felt assured in the first case that she would be kept safe from harm.

So the outlaw captain argued that the interests of himself and band could be better served by putting the daring intruder to death than by allowing him to live even if he agreed to join the gang.

But though he had about made up his mind to this, yet he thought it wise to conceal the truth from the captive.

He imagined that by promising to spare his life on condition that he became a member of the outlaw band, the prisoner would be induced to reveal to him how it was that he became possessed of the secret of the girl's whereabouts, a circumstance which puzzled the chief conspirator exceedingly.

His cunning brain had contrived the whole affair, and he had been nearly a year in carrying it out, for he intended it to be the master-stroke of his professional career.

Every detail had been carefully arranged, and all had been so skillfully planned that it had worked to perfection.

The girl had been abducted, and, as the reader knows, not the slightest clew had been left for the detectives to work upon.

So careful, too, had this master-rascal been in the matter that only two of the band knew aught of the affair, and these two were Captain Pelican's right-hand men, Conkey Bill and Gray Slugger.

Bill naturally had lied to the Chinese when he protested that both he and the Slugger were new members of the gang.

But now, thanks to the interference of this meddling interloper, four more of the band were in possession of the secret, and the desperado captain was annoyed at the circumstance.

Now, even if he put the intruding stranger to death, he would be compelled to find some new hiding-place for the girl, for he knew it would never do to permit four of the common members of the band to remain in possession of so valuable a secret.

These were not men to be trusted with such a secret, for a big offer on the part of the bereaved father would be sure to induce some one of them to betray the trust.

Of course it had not yet been made apparent that the girl who had been confined in the cave was the daughter of the railroad king, the missing girl about whom so much row was being kicked up, but the men were not fools, though only common, low, ignorant ruffians, and when they came to think over the matter, they would be sure to hit upon the truth.

And in that case what would be more natural than for some of them tempted by a rich reward to turn traitor.

The girl must be conveyed to some secure place and a plausible story concocted to deceive the men into the belief that she was not the missing female in regard to whom the metropolis was so excited.

And the daring adventurer in the Chinese garb.

He must be either persuaded or forced to tell how it was that he hit so easily upon the secret hiding-place.

Conkey Bill had concealed from the outlaw captain the part that he had played in the matter.

His story was that the Chinaman had sought by the aid of the torture to make him reveal the easiest way to get at the cave, the existence of which was known to him, and he also had a pretty correct idea as to the actual whereabouts of the secret haunt.

Of course Bill protested that he didn't "give anything away," and in fact he wouldn't have said a word about the matter had it not been necessary in order to capture the Chinaman, to inform the captain, upon his timely arrival, of where the supposed disguised detective had gone.

Pelican was a shrewd rascal, if he had not been he could never have successfully handled

so gigantic a criminal league as the one over which he now presided so ably.

He did not place the most implicit faith in Conkey Bill's story.

His impression was that the Chinese had been too much for Bill, and that under the influence of the novel method of torture adopted by the Celestial he had betrayed the secret of the girl's prison-house.

But that did not explain how the Chinaman managed to get upon the track in the first place, and this was what the outlaw leader most desired to learn.

He was afraid that there was a leak somewhere, and if the source of information was not discovered and provided for in the future at any time a trap might be sprung which would lead to the capture and destruction of the entire band.

The man was a detective, the idea that he was a true Mongolian was absurd, and the captain, upon cogitating about the matter, came to the conclusion that the best way to bring the man to own up that he was not a Chinese, as he claimed, was to prove that he was not a Mongolian.

"You are a Simon-pure Chinaman then and not a detective in disguise," the outlaw captain observed, after quite a long pause, during which his mind had been busy in these reflections which we have chronicled.

"Me Chinaman—Hong Kong, Chin Chin, good Chinaman," replied the other.

"I'll soon see whether that is so or not!" exclaimed the outlaw, and then he proceeded to undo the garments of the latter until his naked breast was exposed to view.

He believed that when the color of the captive's skin should be seen it would plainly denote that its wearer was a member of the proud Caucasian race, his idea being that the face and hands of the man were artificially colored.

Judge of Captain Pelican's disappointment when, bending eagerly forward, he gazed upon a breast as yellow as saffron.

If the skin was artificially colored, the dye had evidently been applied to the whole of the Chinaman's person.

The Celestial observed this proceeding with wondering eyes, as if he didn't understand what the other was up to.

"Chin Chin, good Chinaman," he repeated.

With a smothered curse at being thus baffled, Captain Pelican proceeded to search the person of the prisoner, thinking that, if he was a detective, in some of his pockets something might be found to implicate him.

The search was a fruitless one, for nothing amounting to anything came to light.

The outlaw leader was puzzled.

His suspicion that the captive was a detective was extremely strong, but, so far, not the slightest thing had come to light to confirm the truth of the belief, and the only reasonable explanation of the mystery was that the prisoner had spoken truly when he stated that he was only a Chinaman whose avarice had been excited by the offer of the large reward.

But how had he ascertained the whereabouts of the missing girl—how did he discover and what led him to suspect that she was in the neighborhood?

And this question he immediately put to the captive.

The explanation of the Chinaman was quite plausible.

On the preceding evening he had sought shelter in the barn attached to the old house, finding a bed in the hay, and while snugly reposing there, the two ruffians who had been left in charge of the abducted girl had conversed in his hearing about the matter, and this had inspired him with the idea of rescuing her.

This seemed probable, yet the outlaw leader comprehended that he would not be apt to learn whether the story was true or not, for he knew both of the ruffians well enough to understand that neither one would acknowledge that they had been imprudent enough to "give the thing away" in such a stupid manner.

"Well, my fine fellow, you're in a deuce of a hole," the bandit remarked, as he rose to depart, "and before this night is ended I reckon you will be sorry that you ever took it into your head to poke your nose in business which does not concern you in the least."

And with this ominous threat the speaker quitted the cave.

"Me good Chinaman," the captive remarked, in a plaintive sort of way.

"Chin Chin catchee toposide hill; mebbe 'Melican man no hold washee washee vely long, you bet!"

It was plain the heathen did not despair.

#### CHAPTER X.

##### A FEARFUL DOOM.

CAPTAIN PELICAN sought his two confidential men at once, and unfolded to them the tale that the Chinaman had told.

But it was as he had anticipated.

Both the Slugger and Conkey Bill swore that they had not exchanged a word on the subject of the girl anywhere near the barn on the preceding night.



And, in fact, neither one of the two had been within earshot of the barn after dark had set in.

They admitted that the Celestial might have been concealed in the hay, as he had declared, for all they knew, for they had not examined the interior of the barn at all, but they greatly doubted it though, for they had sat outside the door smoking until about ten o'clock, and if any one had approached the house, Conkey Bill with his wonderfully fine hearing would surely have detected the fact.

"Well, boys, I think the fellow has been stuffing me with a ghost story," Captain Pelican remarked when they had concluded.

"And I would be willing to give a good big bill of cash to discover how the fellow managed to get on the right track.

"One thing though seems to me to be pretty certain, the rascal is a Chinese sure enough, and not a white man in disguise.

"I took him to be a detective, but if he is, he's a John for all that, and a Chinese detective is something that I never heard of."

"It beats my time," Conkey Bill observed.

"Right you are!" exclaimed the Slugger. "Such a thing no man ever heered tell on, and another mighty tough thing about the matter is the way the beggar can fight.

"Why, he can use his mauleys as well as though he had been used to the ring all his life."

"The fellow is stubborn, too," said the captain, "and neither by soft words or by threats was I able to get anything out of him."

"Mighty dangerous man, captain," Conkey Bill observed, with a wise shake of the head.

"You bet he is!" exclaimed the Slugger.

"And whether he is a white man in disguise, or a genuine Chinese, he is a dangerous devil, and must be put out of the way as soon as possible," the outlaw chief remarked.

"Your head is level about that!" cried Conkey Bill, and then, with a horrid grin, he drew his hand across his throat, significantly.

"Yes, yes, slit his windpipe for him!" the Slugger exclaimed, "and I'll volunteer to do the job. I owe the cuss a grudge for the way he handled me, curse him!"

"I reckon the durned yellow heathen got more fun out of me than any of the rest," Conkey Bill hastened to remark.

"You ought to have seen him a-squatting down jest like a big yellow frog, tickling the soles of my feet with a durned straw, and grinning like an ape every time I let a yell out of me.

"Captain, I'm the man who ought to put an extinguisher on the cove; jest give me a chance to git square with him."

"The infernal scoundrel!" the leader of the gang exclaimed, with an angry scowl.

Thanks to him the secret of the missing girl is now known to four of the band; and four of the common men, too, who ought never to be trusted with so weighty a matter.

"All of them are leaky vessels and the chances are about a hundred to one that this big reward of a thousand dollars offered for the girl's rescue will be apt to make some one of them peach, and so upset the scheme which I had been so careful in planning."

"Say, captain, I've an idee!" exclaimed Conkey Bill, abruptly.

Bill had the reputation of being one of the longest-headed men on the "cross," in the country.

In the "argot" language of the dangerous classes, to be on the cross signifies a member of the criminal class, in contradistinction to "on the square," which denotes the toilers who strive to live an honest and upright life.

And both the professional criminals and the bloodhounds that hunt them down alike said of Bill, the Conk, that if he had the courage to back his brains, he would be one of the most dangerous men in the country.

Lacking pluck he was but a sneak thief, glad to steal cents, whereas if he had possessed courage equal to his talents he would have been able to help himself to dollars.

"Your ideas are generally good, Bill, so go ahead," the captain remarked.

"You're skeer'd for fear that some of the boys will be apt to give the thing away?"

"Yes, they are not the kind of men calculated to resist great temptation, and the moment they get it into their noddles that the girl is here for whom a reward of a thousand dollars is offered, I'm afraid that some of them will be apt to play the traitor.

"A thousand dollars, you know, is not to be picked up every day in the week," the outlaw leader said in conclusion.

"Of course the fools wouldn't have sense enough to know that by letting you play the game there's a chance to make fifty thousand instead of one," Conkey Bill observed, shrewdly.

"It is impossible to take every man in the gang into your confidence in a matter of this kind," said the captain.

"Too many cooks spoil the broth, you know; and all such bands as ours must be governed on the despotic plan.

"The leader commands without saying why,

and the men obey, without knowing the wherefore."

"Exactly, and that is the only way the jig can be worked," remarked Conkey Bill.

"But I say, Bill, spit out your idea. I'm git-tin' tired of this talk and no work."

"You never shoot off your mouth without saying something, do ye, Slugger," the other retorted.

"But to come to the point. This here durned Chinese spy ought for to be made an example of, whether he's a detective or the genuine article."

"Don't be alarmed about that; his doom is sealed," replied Captain Pelican with a grim smile.

"Of course I reckon that you would be apt to settle his hash, but my idea is to put him to death after some awful fashion right afore the men so as to kinder frighten 'em."

"I see, I see!" exclaimed the outlaw leader, "and a capital idea it is too."

"Yes, and you can gi'n 'em a leetle warning about how that is the way to treat spies and traitors."

"Durned if Conkey Bill hasn't struck out a good idee," commented the Slugger.

"Yes, it is excellent, and if we put him to death in such a way as to make the sight a horrible one, it will undoubtedly make our rascals take a second thought before rushing off to collar the thousand dollars to be made by betraying us."

"Of course I shall take all possible precautions against being betrayed. I have another secure retreat to which I will have the girl conveyed, and you two will be the only ones intrusted with the secret."

"But now, in regard to the death of this fellow—how shall we accomplish it and at the same time strike terror to the hearts of our men? Have you thought of anything?"

"Tie him to a tree and throw knives at him," suggested the Slugger, who had once witnessed such a scene as this depicted in a picture, and the impression had never been effaced from his memory.

"If we had any men skilled in throwing knives such a thing might be arranged, but, as it is, I do not think it feasible," observed the bandit captain.

"How would it do to tie him to a tree-trunk and then launch him on the timber-slide down into the river?" asked Conkey Bill, a smile worthy of a demon lighting up his face as he made the suggestion.

A short distance from the old house was a slight break in the edge of the Palisades, and in the spring-time water found its way through the break and flowed down the steep rock-side to the river.

The early pioneers had taken advantage of this fact and utilized the bed of the spring torrent as a "shoot" to convey their timber to the river, where it was made up into rafts and floated down the Hudson.

Hundreds and hundreds of tree-trunks had been thus slid down into the river, and the friction had made a well-defined path.

"The idea is a capital one, and this cursed spy shall die just such a death!" the outlaw leader declared.

"The moon is out bright and full to-night, and at the midnight hour the deed shall be done. By the time it reaches the river the body will be mangled beyond recognition, in all probability, but if by any lucky chance he should manage to escape death during the passage, his weight will keep him under the log and the water will make an end to him."

The others agreed with the bandit captain that this was the best thing that could be done with the daring spy.

At midnight then, just as the bells of the distant city were pealing the hour out on the still air, the desperadoes bore the helpless Chinaman to the head of the slide.

A last effort had been made by Captain Pelican to force a confession from the Chinaman, but he stuck stubbornly to the story he had told.

Perceiving that it was idle to waste time upon him, the captain had him bound to a log about ten feet long which the ruffians had provided.

"Hurry up, for it's getting cloudy!" commanded the bandit leader.

And this was true, for dark masses of clouds were now scudding across the face of the sky.

The log with the hapless Chin Chin securely tied to its upper part was brought to the edge of the cliff.

"Now, cursed spy, down you go to death!" Captain Pelican cried.

And then, in obedience to his command, over the edge of the cliff the ruffians launched the log and away with tremendous velocity, after it got under headway, went this novel vehicle and its helpless passenger.

## CHAPTER XI.

### FACE TO FACE.

THE clouds began to cover the face of the moon just as the log went over the edge of the cliff, so that the jeering ruffians did not have as good a view of the "circus"—as they termed it—as they had calculated upon, and they were somewhat disappointed; but in an interval when

the moon shone through the clouds they caught sight of the log rushing, like a living thing, toward the river, and as far as they could see the Chinaman still remained uppermost.

This was due to the fact that where the heavy branches had been chopped off stubs projected at right angles on both sides of the trunk, so that the log could not roll over.

The ruffians, not being practiced woodsmen, had not taken any notice of these; so their anticipation that the prisoner would be dreadfully mangled by contact with the earth during his journey was not realized.

The moon shone out bright for a moment just as the log plunged into the river, and then an extremely large and dark cloud covering the face of the heavens hid everything in semi-darkness.

It was nearly ten minutes before the cloud passed away, and then the light of the moon came forth, affording the gang a view of the river.

With eager eyes they glared downward. The tide was on the ebb, and the water was racing toward the sea at a high rate of speed.

The log could be plainly distinguished.

It was about a hundred feet from the shore and in the full embrace of the current.

But there was no Chinaman to be seen.

"Aha!" cried the bandit captain, in huge glee. "It is just as I predicted, boys. I knew his weight would bring him undermost, and by this time the water has undoubtedly strangled him. So it's good-by, spy!"

"If we hadn't finished him I reckon he would have finished us," Conkey Bill remarked.

"No doubt about it!" the captain cried, "and whether he was a detective in disguise or a genuine Chinese, I regard him as the most dangerous man who ever got after us."

"You kin bet high on that!" the Slugger observed. "Hang me! if I think I ever met a man who could use his fists so well. He was about the hardest hitter I ever faced, and in my time I have stood up ag'in' the best ov 'em."

"Oh, he was a dangerous fellow, there isn't any mistake about that, and if he was in communication with the police authorities we may have a warm time ahead of us," the leader observed.

"Anyway we must prepare for it. It doesn't look reasonable to me that the fellow could have got on our track without some assistance from somebody."

"And even if it isn't the truth, we must act on the supposition that it is, and make everything safe."

"Right you are, governor; arter we have gone on so long without any pull-backs it would be a blooming shame now for the cops to git us dead to rights," Conkey Bill remarked.

"If the police are in with this fellow, and he was their spy, every moment we linger here is fraught with danger, and the quicker we get out the better," suggested the outlaw chief.

"So Conkey and the rest, with the exception of the Slugger, had better start for the city. Take the boat, row down to Weehawken and cross the ferry there, and take care not to go in a body, as that might excite suspicion."

"The Slugger and I will fix everything here so that if the police make a raid they will only have their labor for their pains, and then we'll hoof it down to the ferry."

"All right, captain, we'll be keeferful not to do anything likely to put the cops on our track," Conkey Bill replied.

"I'm afraid that my cake is all dough now as far as the girl is concerned," Captain Pelican remarked, with a light laugh.

"She took a fancy to me and ran away from her home, and I hid her away here, so that her folks couldn't get on the track."

"She thinks I'm a commercial traveler, and that is why I am away so much; but after the lively fight she saw to-day I suppose I will have trouble to make her think that everything is all right."

"I've told her a cock-and-bull story about the Chinaman being a notorious desperado, and that he attempted to break into the cave because he thought there were valuable goods concealed in it, and that you fellows were detectives who had been in chase of him for a long time."

"It's a pretty tough story, though, and I am afraid that even this innocent country kid is hardly green enough to swallow it, and if she suspects the truth I'll have to let her go adrift for my own safety."

"Captain, if you'll take my advice, you'll let these gals alone," Conkey Bill remarked, with the air of a sage.

"It has been my experience ever since I went into this sort of business, that these gals allers get men into difficulties."

"You are about right, I guess, and I will look out not to be caught in such a scrape again," replied the outlaw leader, and Conkey Bill and the rest departed, while Captain Pelican and the Slugger walked toward the house.

The idea of this rather improbable story was to throw the members of the gang off the scent—to keep them from suspecting that the girl who had been shut up in the cave and the missing maiden for whom the large reward was offered was one and the same.



"I think that yarn will pull the wool over their eyes," the captain remarked to the Slugger as they walked toward the house.

"And you kin depend upon Conkey to tell 'em all sorts of ghost stories," observed the other, with a chuckle.

"Conkey has got the gift of the gab, and when he feels like it kin talk like a Dutch uncle."

"A thousand dollars, you know, is a pretty big temptation for the average man, and although I think all the boys are true blue, yet I wouldn't like to expose them to any such pull as the chance to collar a thousand dollars by merely opening their mouths.

"It is altogether too severe a test for weak human nature to be subjected to," Captain Pelican remarked.

"I think, though, we have fixed the matter so that there won't be any danger of the boys giving the thing away, and even if one of them should turn traitor and put the detectives on the scent, the knowledge will not help the blood-hounds much, for by the time the boys reach the city I will have the girl out of this place, and I will be careful to not leave any clew so that the police spies will be able to follow me."

"I tell you, gov'nor, this 'ere is a big game that you are playing!" the Slugger exclaimed, in a sudden outburst of enthusiasm, as he reflected upon the great skill of his captain.

"Yes, the game is a big one, and yet it is perfectly simple too," the outlaw leader replied.

"And the bigger and simpler the game the easier it can be worked, as a general rule."

"I guess there ain't any mistake about that," the Slugger remarked, "and if there is any man in the world who kin do the trick, you kin."

This was no mere empty compliment, for the ruffian had the utmost confidence in his captain.

By this time the two had reached the house.

The girl had been placed in the front room and the doors locked, so it was impossible for her to escape.

The keys being in possession of the bandit captain, he had no difficulty in obtaining an entrance.

"It is rather an unseemly hour to call upon a lady, but under the circumstances it is impossible for me to do otherwise," the captain remarked, with a grin that amply displayed his white, fang-like teeth.

"Oh, she'll have to excuse you," and then the Slugger grinned as if he thought it was a very good joke.

The two entered the house by way of the kitchen.

The captain lit a couple of candles, placed one upon the kitchen table, and bade the Slugger be seated and await his return.

Then he unlocked the door of the front apartment and entered.

The girl had been placed upon one of the beds in the room when she had been carried thither in her insensible state, and when she recovered possession of her senses, finding herself in utter darkness, she had not stirred.

But now when the outlaw captain entered and the rays of the candle illuminated the room, she rose to a sitting posture and gazed at him with anxious eyes.

The story of her abduction was a strange one, and she was utterly at a loss to account for what had happened to her.

She had retired to her room, and as she was suffering from a severe cold, had taken a dose from a cough mixture which the family doctor had prescribed.

The medicine tasted the same as usual; she did not perceive that there was anything out of the way with it, but the effect it produced was entirely new to her.

A stupor seemed to creep over her almost immediately; she remembered sinking into a chair which stood near at hand, and then all was a blank until she awoke and found herself the inmate of the cave from which the Chinaman had so boldly attempted to rescue her.

But how she had come in the cave, or why she had been placed there was a mystery.

She had not seen a human face until the yellow-skinned Mongolian broke in the door.

That she had been abducted for no good purpose, and by a band of desperate men, was evident to her, for the assault upon the Chinaman showed she had fallen into the hands of villains who would not hesitate at any crime.

But now that she was face to face with one, who was plainly one of the principal men of the outlaw gang, she felt glad, for soon she would know the worst, and then the terrible suspense would be ended.

## CHAPTER XII.

### CAPTAIN PELICAN'S GAME.

THE girl surveyed the intruder calmly, much to the astonishment of the outlaw chief, for he had expected a wild outburst upon his appearance.

But he had miscalculated the endurance of the girl, for he had no idea that she was of the stuff of which heroines are made.

Young in years, tender and affectionate, reared in the lap of luxury shielded from all contact

with the rude world ever since the early hours of her infancy, it was really annoying that the girl should display such fortitude when placed in so trying a situation.

Upon her face was merely an anxious expression, coupled with a look of inquiry as though she was impatient to discover the meaning of these strange proceedings in which she had borne so prominent a part.

The bandit chief crossed the room, placed the candle upon the mantle-piece, and then, resting his arm upon the corner of it, gazed upon the girl.

Never before to his eyes had she looked so surpassingly beautiful.

She was quite pale, but that only added a new charm to her rare loveliness, and as he looked upon this entrancing creature a wild desire sprang up in the heart of the outlaw, and he murmured to himself:

"Oh, if I could only keep this beautiful girl to myself forever and forever."

But then the old maxim rose up in his mind, "business before pleasure," and he choked down the passionate longing and became the outlaw chief with an eye single to the main chance.

"Well, young lady, how do you find yourself?" he said, speaking in a hoarse, gruff voice, evidently assumed to hide his real tones.

The girl being a perfect musician, having from childhood evinced great liking for that delightful science and enjoyed all the advantages in that line money could procure, had a most exquisite ear for sounds, and therefore the moment the disguised outlaw spoke, she felt satisfied that the man's voice was not unfamiliar to her ears.

She was positive she had heard it before, but was unable to tell where.

It might be that the man was one of the numerous servants who were employed in her father's house, for the railroad king lived in such style that it needed a small army of domestics to run his palace-like mansion.

Then, too, the millionaire received a great deal of company.

It was his notion to pose as a patron of the arts; rising literary men, musicians, singers and artists were often his guests and to be a guest at these receptions was thought to be quite the "proper caper" by the belles and beaux of the "upper ten."

Evangeline was always present on these occasions and of course made many casual acquaintances.

Gentlemen by the score were introduced to her by her father; a few words of conversation were exchanged, and perhaps she never saw one out of twenty of them again.

It might be possible that this familiar voice belonged to one of these casual acquaintances.

Evangeline had such a wonderful ear and such a tenacious memory that she was not certain that the voice might belong to a man with whom she had only exchanged half a dozen words.

She believed though that she would be able to decide after a few minutes' conversation whether the disguised man was one whom she had been accustomed to hearing speak, or merely the casual acquaintance of a day.

"I am not very well, sir," she replied, "and I am utterly at a loss to understand the meaning of this outrageous proceeding."

"Why have I been taken from my home and where am I?"

"The first question I can answer easily enough, but the second is not material and you must excuse me if I do not satisfy your curiosity in regard to where you are."

The man still spoke in the coarse, gruff tones, still evidently endeavoring to disguise his voice, and it must be admitted that he did it very cleverly too, and if the girl had not been gifted with a remarkably fine ear she would never have suspected that the man was not an utter stranger to her.

But as she listened to his speech, stronger and stronger became the conviction in her mind that he was more than a casual acquaintance.

It was very mysterious, and the more Evangeline reflected upon the circumstance the more puzzled she became.

"Oh, yes, the first question is just what I came to talk to you about," Captain Pelican continued.

"I presume I ought to ask your pardon for having taken the liberty of bringing you here without consulting your wishes in regard to it, but then you see necessity knows no law, and under the circumstances it was absolutely impossible for me to have any say in the matter."

"I trust that you will admit you have not been harmed in the least, although I have no doubt you have been terribly alarmed."

"It is a wonder that I have not been prostrated by fright," the girl replied; "and if I had died, my death would have lain at your door."

"Undoubtedly!" the other exclaimed, in the most matter-of-fact way in the world.

"That was a risk that had to be taken, and I calculated upon it in advance; but as it did not appear to me that there was any great danger of such a thing happening, I resolved to take the chances."

"It was an inhuman resolve!" Evangeline exclaimed spiritedly.

"I won't attempt to discuss that point with you," the captain replied.

"My game is a big one, and must be carried out at all hazards."

"A few words will explain. I am the president of a society organized for the express purpose of reforming some flagrant abuses which exist in society as it is at present constituted."

"We are the Socialists of the Black Hand. Across the water in Europe we are already a power, and now we propose to make our existence known—and felt, in this country."

The girl opened her eyes widely at this statement, for she could not comprehend what such a society had to do with her.

She was well-informed on the current topics of the day, and through the daily newspapers knew of the existence of such an organization as this mysterious personage referred to, but had never paid any particular attention to it or to the doings of the members, as the subject did not possess the least bit of interest to her.

"You are surprised, I perceive," the disguised man remarked.

He had paused for a moment as if to note the impression which his announcement produced upon the girl.

"And I presume you are wondering what the dreaded Socialists of the Black Hand have to do with so charming a lady as Miss Evangeline Carrickford?"

"Yes; that is true; I do not understand what I am to them or they to me."

"In yourself, you are nothing to them but a very beautiful girl whom they would delight to honor, if the chance was afforded them, but as the daughter and heiress of Emanuel Carrickford, the great railroad king, who counts his wealth by millions, circumstances compel them to take a great deal of interest in you."

"The Socialists of the Black Hand are a revolutionary body; the organization is designed to right existing wrongs."

"It is their mission to pull down the rich and powerful and to elevate the poor and friendless."

The girl felt her heart sink within her as she listened to these ominous words.

She began to understand now; her abduction was a blow leveled not at her, but at her father.

Through the person of his dearly-prized child these evil-minded men hoped to reach and wound the railroad king.

Captain Pelican was watching the face of the girl intently as he spoke, and he saw by the expression that she was beginning to understand his meaning.

"You know, my dear young lady, that it is all wrong in the nature of things for one man to be worth twenty millions of dollars, as they say your father is, and for another man, just as worthy in every way, to toil, year in and year out, for just enough to keep him from starving."

"We Socialists of the Black Hand are going to try to remedy this frightful state of things so far as lies in our power."

"We intend to make these rich men of your father's stamp disgorge a little of their wealth. They must share with their poorer brothers."

"What is a million or two to Emanuel Carrickford? Nothing at all!"

"He would not feel the loss of a million of dollars at one fell swoop as much as the hard-handed workingman would the loss of a ten-dollar bill."

"The loss of the note might mean starvation to the horny-handed son of toil, while to your father, beyond the annoyance which he might feel at the loss of the money, the flight of the million would not affect him any more than the bite of a flea."

"In fact, I've not the least doubt that a bad dinner which would spoil his digestion would be to him by far the greater calamity."

"My father does not care for money!" the girl declared, proudly. "He is not a slave to gold."

"No, because he has plenty of it," retorted the other, quickly.

"Let fortune change though—let his wealth take unto itself wings and fly away—let him know what it is to walk the streets uncertain where his next meal is to come from, or where he is to lay head that night, and my word upon it, he will worship gold with as eager and earnest an idolatry as any man that exists upon the earth."

"I do not believe it!" Evangeline replied. "My father is too noble a man to debase himself. Besides, with his great gifts he would always be able to keep above the reach of poverty."

The outlaw indulged in a harsh, contemptuous laugh.

"No doubt you believe what you say, but time may show you that you are wrong."

"But to come right down to business. The Socialists of the Black Hand have assessed your father for a contribution of one hundred thousand dollars."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### VISITORS WHO WERE NOT EXPECTED.

THE expression upon the features of the girl plainly exhibited the surprise she felt at this announcement.



"One hundred thousand dollars!" she exclaimed.

"That is the sum exactly—one hundred thousand dollars," he repeated, slowly, giving due emphasis to each word with uplifted forefinger, and as he did so Evangeline noticed that instead of having bare hands as she had thought, the fingers of the ruffian were covered with flesh-colored gloves, stained with dirt, so that at a distance no one would be apt to suspect that his hands were not bare.

The moment the girl made this discovery she immediately jumped to the conclusion that there was something peculiar about his hands by which he feared he might be recognized, and so he took care to hide them from sight.

The hands were coarse and large, apparently the hands of a man who had been used to hard work all his life, not the slender, delicate fingers of the gentleman of leisure, or the pen-using clerk, unaccustomed to rough, manual labor.

"One hundred thousand dollars is a trifle to a man of Emanuel Carrickford's wealth, as I have explained to you," the captain continued.

"The assessment that we have levied upon him is really a light one, and he can easily afford to pay it; but as I had an idea that he would not feel disposed to come up to the captain's office and settle, I took measures to make him toe the mark."

"You are his daughter—his only child, and, if report speaks true, are as dear to him as the apple of his eye."

By this time the girl began to understand something of the scheme which the ruffian had planned and in which she was to play so prominent a part, and a feeling of dismay took possession of her.

The keen eyes of Captain Pelican did not fail to correctly read the thoughts of the girl as translated by her expressive face.

"Aha!" he exclaimed, rubbing his hands together gleefully. "I perceive you are beginning to understand what all this means."

"I am glad of it; I like to deal with sensible people; it saves a deal of talk and explanation."

"My associates and myself debated this matter for some time after we had decided to levy an assessment of a hundred thousand dollars upon your father, and we came to the conclusion that he not only would not pay the money, but laugh at us for a pack of fools for even daring to think he would."

"Then my genius rose to the occasion, and I suggested that if we were to take measures to get you into our possession, after that little event took place your father might be inclined to listen to reason."

"In plain words, then I have been kidnapped and am to be held for a ransom!" Evangeline exclaimed, indignantly.

"Exactly!" and again the bandit chief rubbed his hands briskly together to denote his satisfaction.

"Aha, my dear young lady, it is really a pleasure to do business with such a clear-sighted person as yourself."

"You have grasped the situation immediately and so saved me a world of explanation."

"You have hit it exactly. You have been abducted, and are held here for ransom, and will be held until your father deposits with my agents one hundred thousand dollars."

"Then you will be restored to him unhurt—unharmed in every way."

"Have you communicated with my father upon the subject?" Evangeline asked, her brain in a whirl, for she was horrified by the discovery of the terrible trap into which she had fallen.

"No, and that is exactly what I have come to see you about."

"Your father, of course, is dreadfully worried by your unaccountable disappearance, for the affair, my dear young lady, was planned and carried out in such a superb manner that your disappearance is as wonderful as though you had been carried by fairy hands up through the air."

"Detectives have been employed, rewards offered, and the city almost turned upside down, to find you or some trace of your whereabouts, but I am proud to say that all this search has not resulted in the discovery of the slightest clew."

Then to the mind of the girl came the sudden remembrance of the Chinaman who had broken in the door of the cave where she had been confined with an ax, and she immediately came to the conclusion that he was a detective, and that accounted for the murderous assault made upon him by the gang who had arrived so unexpectedly upon the scene just as the Chinese had demolished the barrier which guarded the entrance to the cave.

"That Chinaman then was a detective in disguise!" she exclaimed, "and if it had not been for your timely arrival he would have restored me to my father."

"Oh, no, no, nothing of the kind," the outlaw chief replied, with a contemptuous laugh. "He was merely a wandering vagabond who, happening to come across the cave and perceiving that the mouth of it was securely fastened, got the crazy idea into his head that some valuables were concealed there and that by breaking in

the door he might be able to help himself to all he wanted."

"Of course he had no notion that there was anybody but himself in the neighborhood."

"Couldn't you see from his looks that he was a genuine Chinaman and not a white man in disguise?"

The girl was perplexed, and knew not whether to believe the story or not.

The statement, though, that the man was a real Chinaman seemed to her to be correct, for if it was a white man in disguise the assumption of character was truly a marvelous one.

"Don't delude yourself with the idea that there is any chance of your being rescued from my hands by the detective officers or police, for I have taken such precautions that there is not the slightest danger of such an event."

"The only thing that can take you out of my power is your father's check for a hundred thousand dollars, and the quicker he draws it after he understands how the land lies, the better it will be for you."

There was a covert threat in this, and Evangeline understood as much.

The vague talk of the disguised ruffian about being the leader of a band of socialists did not deceive her in the least.

It might be the truth and it might not; it made but little difference.

One thing was certain: she was in the power of a scoundrel who had abducted her for the purpose of extorting a princely ransom from her father, and unless she was lucky enough to be rescued from his hands she might expect no mercy if her father did not yield to the demand for the hundred thousand dollars.

That he would gladly pay twenty times that sum to save her from harm she knew full well, therefore there was very little danger of any harm coming to her, but it galled her pride terribly when she reflected that she was to be the innocent cause of robbing her father of so large a sum.

"Now, my dear young lady, that you comprehend exactly how matters stand, I want you to write a few lines to your father and explain to him the conditions under which you may be restored to your home and friends once more."

"Your father may be more apt to pay attention to a note written by you, than to any communication from a stranger."

"Besides, a few words in your own handwriting, which is of course familiar to him, will tend to remove the load of anxiety which now weighs so heavily upon his mind."

"My poor, poor father," murmured Evangeline, tears starting to her beautiful eyes.

"A letter from you stating that you are alive and well will instantly set his mind at rest, although I do not suppose he will be particularly pleased when he discovers that in order to enjoy the pleasure of your society he will be compelled to disgorge a cool hundred thousand dollars."

"But, as I remarked, that is only a trifle to him. I presume you are willing to write this note?"

"Oh, yes," replied the girl, immediately.

From an inside pocket Captain Pelican produced a pad of note-paper and a stylograph pen.

"Will you dictate?" Evangeline asked as she prepared to write.

"No, state the facts briefly in your own way. You are in the hands of a socialistic society who desire a contribution of a hundred thousand dollars from Emanuel Carrickford, Esquire. When the money is paid—I will explain how the transfer can be effected—you will be returned to your home."

Evangeline nodded and then addressed herself to her task.

"DEAR FATHER," she wrote, "I am alive and well but have been abducted and am now in the hands of a band of men who call themselves socialists and who demand a ransom of one hundred thousand dollars for me."

"It is by their orders that I now write to you; so far I have not been harmed at all, but have been dreadfully frightened."

"With much love I remain

"Your affectionate daughter,

"EVANGELINE."

"Capital!" the outlaw leader exclaimed, after he had perused the epistle.

"Brief and to the point, not a word too much or too little."

"It is a model of a letter!"

Then he folded it up carefully and placed it in a large pocket-book, which he stowed away in an inner breast-pocket.

Hardly had this been done when there was the sound of rapid firing without.

Sharp and shrill rung out the pistol-shots on the air and then came the rush of many feet.

With a fearful oath Captain Pelican dashed out the light.

He understood immediately that the police had made an attack.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### THE ATTACK.

THE girl had sprung to her feet, her eyes dilated, her lips trembling, in fact, her whole frame quivering with excitement, when the sound of the shots without broke upon her ears.

Possibly she might not have suspected the truth so quickly had not the oath of the outlaw chief and his sudden extinguishing of the light opened her eyes as to the nature of the interruption.

Rescue was evidently at hand and her heart bounded with joy.

The shutters of the windows were closed, so that when the candle was extinguished the room was plunged in utter darkness.

The shutters were solid ones, not blinds with open slats, so that the old house when the shutters were closed was transformed into a fort, calculated to withstand a sturdy attack.

Hardly was the light extinguished, and the joyful thoughts that rescue was near at hand began to course through the brain of Evangeline, when she felt the grip of the ruffian upon her arm and the cold muzzle of a pistol was pressed against her temple.

"Don't dare to speak above a whisper or I'll stretch you out cold in death!" the ruffian cried in fierce menace while the trembling girl shrank under his touch, fully convinced that the brutal ruffian in whose power she had fallen would not hesitate to execute his threat.

"Come this way and quickly," he continued, forcing her to the rear wall of the room, making his way through the darkness without any difficulty, like one familiar with every inch of the ground.

When the outlaw captain reached the wall he ran his hand over it until he touched a spring, and then a small door flew open.

And from the door came a current of damp, noxious air, and to the heated frenzy of the girl it seemed as if the door was the entrance to some gloomy charnel house filled with grinning skeletons and moldering bones.

"There is a door here, inside is a staircase leading downward!" exclaimed Captain Pelican, hurriedly.

"Enter, descend and wait at the bottom until I come to you, but when you reach the ground beneath do not attempt to move around for there are half a dozen pitfalls there and if you should tumble into one of them harm would be sure to come to your delicate bones."

And then he pushed her into the opening and the door closed with a sharp snap.

Outstretching her hands one of them came in contact with the door which had just closed and the touch made her shudder, for the door was of iron, chilly and damp to the touch.

"Heaven help me," murmured Evangeline in sore despair, "this is being shut in a living tomb."

"Suppose this man, who alone knows that I am here, should be killed in the struggle which, apparently, is about to take place, what then would be my fate shut up in this dreadful prison?"

And a shudder convulsed the slight form of the girl as she reflected upon the terrible plight in which she found herself.

"If the police succeed in entering the room, possibly by hammering on the door with all my feeble strength I might be able to warn them that I am here, but if they do not come into the apartment—if the conflict takes place somewhere else, what then will become of me?"

"Suppose in their desperation that these hardened ruffians set fire to the house, I would be burnt up alive without being able to help myself in the least."

"It is too dreadful for anything!"

And in her despair Evangeline sunk upon her knees, and the hot tears of anguish, wrung from her inmost heart, rushed from her eyes.

Surely since this world began never was there an innocent, helpless girl placed in a more pitiful situation.

Yet, deep as was the terror with which the ruffian inspired her, she determined to disobey his command.

She would not descend the steps but would remain where she was upon the landing.

If the police succeeded in conquering the ruffians and forcing their way into the house, by remaining near the secret door she might be able to let them know that she was shut up in the narrow passage.

Then, too, the words that her captor had spoken in regard to the pitfalls at the foot of the stairs were fresh in her memory and she dared not descend to the underground regions, dark as the ancient gloom that fell once upon a time upon the land of Egypt.

Leaving the girl to her sobs and prayers we will return to the outlaw chief.

Hardly had he thrust the girl into the secret passage and closed the iron door when into the room rushed Conkey Bill and the Slugger.

Bill, in his hand, bore a dark lantern, the light of which—the slide being open—illuminated the apartment.

"Hallo! what's the matter?" Captain Pelican cried.

The two ruffians glanced around the room in search of the girl the moment they entered and discovered that their chief was alone, and were so much astonished at her absence—for the secret of the iron door and the underground passage was not known to them—that, for a moment, they were dumfounded.

"Where's the gal?" cried Conkey Bill.



"Wot's come of her, captain?" exclaimed the Slugger.

"Never you mind her—I'm a magician and have sent her up through the roof-top. Didn't you smell brimstone when you came in? But what is up outside? What's the meaning of those pistol-shots?"

"The devil's to pay, captain, and no pitch hot!" replied Conkey Bill, using the old saying.

"Have the police got after us?"

"Right you are, Cap!" Bill replied.

"I ran into a hull gang of 'em down the river. They were a-hiding in the bushes, and we got right into 'em afore we had an idee that there was a cop within a mile."

"The blazes you did!" growled the outlaw chief, in deep disgust at this untoward event.

"Sure as shooting, and the furst idee we had that there was danger was when the cops jumped out of the bushes and pulled their revolvers on us, a-singing out for us to throw up our hands or they would let daylight right through us."

"Some of the gang had their guns out and in the confusion blazed away, afore they rightly knew wot they were a-doing, I fancy."

"The cops returned the fire and the bullets sung round jest like so many humming-birds; I didn't wait to see how the fight came out, but took to my heels and ran like a greyhound."

"The bullets whistled a durned sight closer to me than I liked, but nary one of 'em winged me and I got away."

"Do you think the rest are taken?" demanded the bandit captain, anxiously.

"Captain, I reckon the boys are either laid out or gathered in by the Metropolitans. You see, I happened to be hanging back a leetle, so I was eight or ten feet behind the others, and that is how I managed to give leg-bail, else they would have had me, for sure."

"How big a squad is there, do you suppose?" Captain Pelican asked.

"About ten men, I should say, but I'm only guessing at it, Cap; under the circumstances, you know, I wasn't particularly anxious to stop and count noses."

"All I was arter was to git away as soon as my legs would let me."

"I say, Cap, wot on earth is to be done?" exclaimed the Slugger, anxiously.

"We are in a pretty considerable tight place as fur as I kin see."

"Did you fasten the doors when you came in?" the outlaw leader asked.

"Oh, yes, we attended to that all right," Conkey Bill replied.

"If any of our men are alive, they'll be apt to peach when they find that the cops have got them dead to rights," Captain Pelican added, thoughtfully.

"Oh, they wasn't all laid out, but I saw two of them drop as though they had been hit mighty hard," Conkey Bill observed.

"It is a hundred to one that the cat is out of the bag by this time," the chief replied, "and as the cops know that this old house is our headquarters, the odds are big that it is surrounded by this time and that we can't get out of this without running into their clutches."

"And, by the way, just 'douse that glim' a little so as not to let them know exactly where we are."

This choice bit of slang meant that Conkey Bill was to shut the slide of the bull's-eye lantern.

He complied immediately with the command, closing the slide so that only a tiny bit of light came from the lantern.

"Now then, let us assume, right at the beginning, that the house is surrounded by the police and that there isn't the slightest chance for us to escape through their lines," remarked the bandit leader.

"I reckon there ain't much doubt that that is about the size of it," the Slugger growled.

"The cops think they have got us like rats in a trap," Captain Pelican continued.

"Guess they ain't much out of the way in that 'ere calculation, eh?" Conkey Bill observed.

"Boys, you ain't doing me justice in this fix," the leader replied.

"I didn't really think that you were such greenhorns as to believe I would be idiot enough to allow myself to be shut up here without a chance to escape."

"Aha! you have got some rat-hole to creep out, eh?" Conkey Bill exclaimed, a weight taken off his mind.

"The gal has disappeared, hain't she?"

The two ruffians cast anxious looks around the room when this question was asked as though they expected to see her lurking in some corner.

"And we can take the road she took," the captain continued without waiting for the pair to reply.

"But first I want to ascertain just what these cops are up to."

#### CHAPTER XV.

##### A PARLEY.

THE two ruffians nodded in a knowing sort of way; they had begun to comprehend their leader's game.

"I want to find out, if I possibly can, how it is that the police have managed to strike the scent so soon," the captain remarked.

"I thought I had covered up every trace and I did not believe there was a detective in the country keen enough to follow my track."

"This durned Chinaman!" suggested Conkey Bill.

"Exactly, that infernal scoundrel is at the bottom of the whole business, I believe," and Captain Pelican ground his teeth fiercely together as he made the remark.

"Well, you've settled his hash as far as this world is concerned," Conkey Bill observed.

"I wish I was sure of it, but I am not," replied the outlaw chief.

"Some of these fellows are like cats, possessed of nine lives and sometimes it seems to be an impossibility to kill them."

"It may be only a coincidence, of course, but it appears to me as if the cops were intended to act in concert with him, and for aught we know the rascal may have escaped from the doom to which we consigned him and may be leading the police now."

"That don't seem possible, Cap," Conkey Bill remarked after thinking the matter over for a moment.

"He may have managed to get loose from the tree-trunk—the lashings which bound him may have parted, cut by the friction as the log slid down into the river—and if he was a good swimmer he could easily get to the bank after he was once in the water; I'll own up, I thought it was a bad sign when the moon shone on the log and we couldn't see nary hide nor hair of him, but there hain't been time for him to git to the city and come back with the cops."

"True enough," the bandit chief remarked; "but suppose it had been arranged beforehand for the police to meet him at a certain spot? The original plan may have been, you know, for the Chinaman to scout in and spy out how the land lay, and then at midnight, when we would be supposed to be off our guard, the 'pull' would be made."

"And the Chinaman, seeing a chance to take the trick single-handed when he fooled us, didn't wait for to carry out the original plan," said Conkey Bill.

"That's the idea, and I'll bet a thousand dollars to a cent that it's correct, too!" Captain Pelican cried.

"Now then, if we are surrounded by the police, and they know, or suspect, we are in here, they are not such fools as to think we are unarmed and attempt to walk right over us by breaking in the doors."

"They have hard, horse sense enough to understand that we are desperate men, armed to the teeth, and unless we are satisfied that there isn't a ghost of a show for us, we'll be sure to fight to the last gasp, so they'll be apt to try and persuade us to surrender."

"Yer head is level on this here p'int, captain," observed Conkey Bill.

"You kin jest bet the captain has got it down fine!" the Slugger declared.

"Oh, I can see as far into a millstone as the next one," Captain Pelican remarked.

"My idea is that the cops will try to get us to surrender by representing that we are surrounded, and that we don't stand any show for our money if we attempt to show fight."

"I s'pose there's a good deal of truth in that, although we have the advantage of being in the house and under cover," Conkey Bill observed.

"Yes, but there's only three of us," grumbled the Slugger, "and we can't hope to keep 'em out if they attack us on all sides at the same time, and from wot you say, Conkey, I should think they had plenty of men for to work that game to the queen's taste."

"We can give them a trial of our quality though!" exclaimed the bandit captain with bulldog-like ferocity.

"If we can lay out five or six of them it will be some satisfaction, at any rate, and I confess I would be willing to run almost any risk if this cursed Chinaman is with the party, and I could get a chance to plug him so that he would stay plugged for keeps."

"We were the biggest idiots in the world that we didn't settle the fellow when we had him foud instead of fooling with the log and the slide, and there was a deal of disgust perceptible in the tones of the outlaw captain as he made the remark."

"If we had stuck a bowie-knife in between his ribs, or put a couple of revolver balls through his noddle, it would have been all right; but we showed ourselves to be a set of infernal fools to play with the scoundrel the way we did."

Hardly had the words escaped his lips when there came a thundering knock at the front door, given evidently with the butt of a pistol.

And no sooner had the sound of the noise died away, when, like an echo, there came a tremendous rap at the rear door leading from the kitchen into the yard.

"You see, it is as I have told you," whispered Captain Pelican to his satellites. "The house is surrounded, and if I had not made preparations in advance to meet just such an emergency, we would be taken like so many rats in a trap."

"Yes, no doubt about that, and they think they have got us dead to rights," Conkey Bill observed.

"I don't suppose there is any doubt in their

minds in regard to our being here—they were close on your heels, eh?"

"Oh, yes, they were right after me, and then the odds are big, Cap, that some of the boys would give the thing away, when they found they were nabbed. Some one of 'em would be sure to squeal in hopes to get out of the hole, for all of 'em are only low, common blokes, no high-toby cracksmen in the gang."

"Well, as long as they know that we are here, I suppose I may as well find out what lay they are on," Captain Pelican remarked.

Then raising his voice he cried:

"Hallo! what do you want?"

"Open in the name of the law!" cried a voice from the outside, in stern, commanding tones.

"Not by a cursed sight!" retorted the ruffian leader.

"That's too thin, you know; you can't play any such game on me. I give fair warning that I am armed, and the first man who attempts to force his way into this house will get the contents of a double-barreled shotgun."

"We are officers and demand admission in the name of the law!" replied the voice.

"So you say, but your saying so don't make it. You have no right, anyhow, to come in here without a warrant, and I demand to see it!"

"I reckon we don't need a warrant to arrest red-handed murderers," replied the voice.

"There's no murderers here—what do you mean, anyhow?"

"We are after the men who tied the Chinaman to a tree-trunk and sent him into the river," said the officer in command of the squad.

"Aha!" cried Captain Pelican, in sullen rage, "the infernal scoundrel escaped then after all. I was afraid that he had when I first heard that the police were in the neighborhood."

"But come, enough of this talking! Are you going to open the door or shall we break it in?" demanded the officer, in a peremptory manner.

"You had better not try that game or it will be the worse for you," Captain Pelican replied, with an angry snarl, akin to the growl of a wild beast brought to bay.

"I'm armed to the teeth, and I'll kill the first man that dares to try to force his way into this house, with as little ceremony as though he was a mad-dog!"

"Your blood will be upon your own head, and I give you fair warning that if you attempt to resist I will not be answerable for the consequences," retorted the police-officer.

"For the last time will you open the door and surrender peaceably?"

Stern and determined was the voice of the assailant as he put the question.

"Captain, that feller is a bull-dog and no mistake," Conkey Bill whispered in the ear of the outlaw leader.

"He means fight, every time," muttered the Slugger, as he felt for his pistols.

"The birds are not caged yet, although the cops, no doubt, think that they have got us in the nicest kind of a trap."

"Inside of ten minutes though their eyes will be opened in a way that will clean disgust them, or else I'm no prophet," Captain Pelican replied.

"Do you surrender?" demanded the officer, impatiently.

"Nary a time, and if you try to force a way into this house half a dozen of you will get laid out! Just put that in your pipe and smoke it!"

"Get your battering-rams ready, men!" commanded the officer, on the outside.

And then in obedience to the command could be heard the sound of heavy footsteps without as though the men who were stirring were laboring under a weighty burden.

"I say, Cap, this here cuss ain't a-going to throw away any chances," Conkey Bill observed.

"So it seems," the outlaw leader replied, a grim smile of contempt upon his lips though.

"Do you see his game? He ain't a-going to try to kick in the doors and give us a chance to pepper his cops, but I reckon he's got some trees, or beams, or something of that sort, so that one lick will splinter both of the doors into kindling wood at the same time, then they'll make a rush and catch us between two fires."

"The fellow has got a head on his shoulders, whoever he is, and I think it's about time that we shin out," replied Captain Pelican.

"So follow me, boys, but I wish I could stay to witness the cops' disappointment when they find after all their trouble that the birds have flown."

As hespoke he led the way to the wall, and, as he finished the sentence, touched the spring and the iron door sprung open.

The girl was on the landing and in the eager hope that rescue was at hand screamed:

"Save me, save me!" at the top of her voice.

#### CHAPTER XVI.

##### A PARTHIAN ARROW.

"HUSH your noise, you little fool! Do you want me to kill you outright?" cried the outlaw leader, in angry passion, and he seized the girl by the throat, but not in time to prevent her from giving utterance to a shrill scream of despair forced from her by the horrible discovery that instead of friends hastening to her rescue,



the man who had opened the door was the villain who had abducted her from her home.

The shrill scream of the girl reëchoed through the old house and came distinctly to the ears of the policemen without, preparing to break in the door.

"Aha! do you hear that?" cried the captain in command of the party. "There's our game! Smash in the door lively, men!"

And then came the sound of two terrific blows, one right after the other.

The first stroke burst the front door from its hinges, and although it was a good, stout piece of woodwork, fair specimen of the joiner's skill, common to the old days, before modern machinery turned out slightly-made doors by the hundred, yet, as Conkey Bill had predicted, the barrier was shattered into a hundred pieces by the force of the stroke.

The rear door which received the second stroke was damaged even worse than the front one.

As the officer in command of the attacking party had anticipated, the fortress was rendered indefensible by the battering-rams, which were simply two good-sized saplings, which, felled and trimmed of their branches, ready to be cut into firewood, the policemen found near the wood-pile.

But as the triumphant shout of the attackers rose on the air, when the doors were shattered into fragments, the iron guard to the secret stairway swung to, and Captain Pelican, raising the light form of the girl in his arms, still retaining his grip upon her throat, so that she could not cry out, led the way down the narrow stairs, closely followed by Conkey Bill and the Slugger.

By the time they reached the foot of the stairway the tramping of the feet overhead showed them that the police were in possession of the house.

"When they find that the game has disappeared that will be surprise number one," Captain Pelican remarked to his satellites, as they hurried along the dark and narrow passage, "and then, if they will only have the patience to fool away about ten minutes in the old house, I will introduce them to surprise number two, and after they experience that, I fancy they will not be anxious to have any further tests of our quality."

Leaving the ruffians to pursue their way with their helpless captive through the bowels of the earth, we will turn our attention to the attackers, who had made so desperate and so successful an assault upon the old house.

As the shrewd outlaw chief, Captain Pelican, had guessed, it was to Chin Chin, the Chinaman, he was indebted for the unexpected arrival of the police.

Despite the fearful nature of the doom to which the supposed spy had been sentenced by the ruffianly gang into whose hands he had fallen, the Chinaman, apparently gifted with the nine lives of the cat, had escaped without injury.

The projecting stubs on the tree had prevented it from turning over, and he had slid down the inclined plane and into the river with as much ease and comfort as though he had been enjoying a "coasting" ride down an ice-hill in the winter time.

Not only had fortune favored him in this respect, but the friction of the passage over the hard surface had abraded the ropes by means of which he was fastened to the tree, and when the log plunged into the river, making a prodigious dive, as though it was a living thing, the force of the shock, coupled with the weight of the Chinaman, burst the bonds asunder, and while the log rose to the surface of the tide in one place, the man came up in another.

He was a magnificent swimmer, apparently as much at home in the water as a Newfoundland dog, and being perfectly cool and self-possessed, not in the slightest degree the worse for the novel experience through which he had passed, when he rose to the surface he took advantage of the fact that the clouds covering the moon, prevented him from being seen and struck out with hasty strokes down the river.

In this movement he was aided by the tide, rushing steadily seaward, and managed to get a good thousand yards away from the point where the slide entered the water, before the moon broke through the clouds again.

Having timely notice of this he swam in to the bank and extending himself at full length in the shallow water with only his head exposed above the surface, waited for the moon to again become obscured.

It was owing to this cunning trick that the outlaws, when they eagerly scanned the river, after the moonbeams shone brightly on the water, were unable to discover him and so jumped to the conclusion that he was under the tree-trunk and had been suffocated by the merciless tide.

When another bank of clouds rolled over the face of the moon and semi-darkness again reigned supreme, the Chinaman gained the land and made his way on foot down along the river's bank, pushing onward over the rough and difficult way with wonderful speed.

It was fully ten minutes before the light of

the moon again illuminated the face of nature and by that time the Chinaman was so far away that he no longer feared discovery but kept straight on until he had covered some two miles and came to where there was a break in the rocky wall affording access to the interior country from the river.

There was a rude sort of landing at this point and drawn up on the beach was a police boat while a score of Metropolitan policemen, in command of a captain, sat upon the rocks in the neighborhood.

They were all fully armed and also equipped with their long "night-sticks," and their being under the command of a captain instead of a sergeant, was proof positive that serious work was expected.

When the Chinaman made his appearance pretty well winded by his exhaustive tramp, the waiting men sprung to their feet.

It was plain they were expecting a summons and took the Celestial as the messenger.

One and all looked disappointed though when they made the discovery that the new-comer was a Chinaman.

But Chin Chin was in too much of a hurry to pay any attention to this.

He marched straight up to the captain and in his peculiar lingo told him that the game was located.

"Aha, you're the man then that I am waiting for?" the captain exclaimed, and then he made a peculiar sign with his fingers, which Chin Chin immediately answered.

This had been arranged beforehand so that the police captain might recognize the spy.

He had expected, though, to see anything but a Chinaman, for this was the first instance on record where an almond-eyed son of the Flowery Kingdom had ever been mixed up in the detective business.

Away went Chin Chin, the captain by his side, and the policemen in the rear.

When the top of the plateau was gained, the Celestial in his queer way explained to the police his plan to trap the rascals, and the officer was forced to admit that it seemed to be perfect in all its details.

And when the detachment arrived within a mile of the old house, the Chinaman explained the necessity of caution, and the men stole forward as noiselessly as a lot of red Indians stealing upon a sleeping foe.

So it happened that they ran into the scouting party commanded by Conkey Bill and were able to surprise them so completely.

Their arrival at and assault upon the house, the reader already knows.

From the character of the ruffians the Metropolitan expected when they smashed in the doors and rushed into the house that a bloody struggle would ensue, and so it was with drawn and cocked revolvers that they made their entrance.

Great was the astonishment when the two detachments met in the center of the house without discovering any signs of the desperadoes who had threatened to make it so warm for the police if they attempted to force an entrance.

Both of the squads were provided with a couple of bull's-eye lanterns, so there was ample light for them to see what they were about.

"What's become of 'em?" cried the police captain, in amazement.

"Me heal gal scleam!" exclaimed the Chinaman.

"So did I; try the garret, and maybe there's a cellar!"

"No signs of cellar; me look once, no find," said Chin Chin.

Some of the men ran up-stairs, while others proceeded to search for a cellar entrance.

There wasn't any one up-stairs, and, as the Chinaman had said, there wasn't any signs of a cellar entrance.

"Could they have made their escape through some of the windows while we were breaking in the doors?" the police captain cried.

"If so, they can't be far off and we can run them down, for with the girl to impede them they can't run very fast."

The officer and Chin Chin at once hurried to the outer air, followed by some of the policemen, while others hastened to examine the windows.

But they were all securely fastened, nor could any trace of the fugitives be discovered on the outside.

"If this ain't the most mysterious business that I ever struck!" the police captain cried.

Hardly had the words left his lips when there was a terrific explosion, just as if old mother earth had suddenly been rent open by an earthquake's giant shock.

This was Captain Pelican's surprise number two.

#### CHAPTER XVII.

##### A BAFFLED SEARCH.

THE desperado leader had tarried long enough in his flight to discharge a Parthian arrow at his pursuers.

And a terrible blow it was, too, that he had dealt the men who were so hot on his trail.

He had taken a lesson from the dynamiters and exploded a cartridge of that fearful explosive under the house.

It was his design to bury in one common ruin the police who were hunting him so closely and the mysterious Chinaman who was doing such good detective work, and then, too, by the explosion he would not only baffle pursuit, but also destroy all traces of the manner in which he and his men, bearing the hapless Evangeline with them, had managed to escape from the beleaguered house.

The shock produced by the explosion was even greater than he had calculated upon, for it blew the old dwelling up into the air as though it had been a house of cards, instead of being a solid, substantial building such as the old-time artisans were wont to construct before the era of this present age of shoddy and cheap work.

Six of the policemen were unfortunate enough to be caught in the house at the time of the explosion, and of the six, three were killed outright by the flying timbers, two badly hurt, and the last man, although he had his clothes almost stripped from his body, was fortunate enough to escape with a few scratches only.

The six men who had been lucky enough to leave the house just before the explosion took place were prostrated by the force of the shock, and a couple of them were pretty badly bruised, being hit by the flying fragments.

The captain of the squad though, and the blood-houndlike Celestial, the two men whom the outlaw leader most desired to destroy, were not in the least injured, although prostrated by the shock.

Nimble as ballet-dancers the two men were on their feet again before the fragments of the house, hurled into the air by the force of the explosion, had again descended to the earth.

"Great Scott!" cried the police captain, in utter astonishment, "what kind of a picnic do you call this, anyhow?"

"Vely big thing—beats Chinaman file-wolks; no catchee Chinaman top-side hill when 'Melican man makee house go bum-bum!" the Celestial declared, shaking his head gravely.

By this time the moon had emerged from the cloud-banks, and its light rendered all objects as visible as though it was day.

The captain glanced around and missed his men at once.

"Great heavens!" he cried, "only four of you here! Is it possible that there have been six men caught in this death-trap?"

"It looks like it, captain," replied the sergeant, who had been lucky enough to get on the outside of the building before the explosion took place.

"Poor fellows—poor fellows!" exclaimed the captain. "I'm sadly afraid that they are done for as far as this world is concerned."

"But come, lend a hand all of you, and we'll see what we can do for them."

They at once set to work to examine the ruins, and after working hard for an hour or so, managed to get at all the men.

As we have said, three of them were past all aid of man, one was not injured in the least, though, as he admitted, was about scared to death, and the other two, though badly bruised, yet had still a good grip on life.

After both living and dead men were rescued from the ruins, and the wounded made comfortable, one of the policemen was dispatched to bring up the boat, so that the sufferers could be transported to the city with as much comfort as possible.

And while the man was absent on this errand the rest set out to discover, if possible, how the desperadoes with their prey had managed to escape from the house.

"Hang me!" cried the police captain, "if I don't think this is about the most mysterious affair that I ever ran into!"

"How, in heaven's name, did the scoundrels manage to get out of the house when we had a guard posted in both front and rear is a mystery."

"Mebbe there was a secret door in the side somewhere," the sergeant suggested.

"Yes, it certainly looks like it, and it was as dark as pitch, too, just at the time we broke the doors in, so if they had slipped out at the side of the house they would have stood a good chance to get away without attracting our notice."

The Chinaman shook his head, thereby implying that he did not agree with the captain in this surmise.

"You don't believe the trick was worked that way, eh?" said the official.

"Me no catchee on to that," replied Chin Chin.

"How was it done then?" queried the captain. "We run two of them into the house; there isn't any mistake about that, for we were right at their heels, and the moon gave light enough to enable us to see them make for the shanty."

"Then the captain of the gang was in there, too, for you said that neither of the two fellows we chased was he, and yet you declared that the man who dared us to break in the doors was the captain of the gang."

"And the gal, she was in there, too, captain," added the sergeant. "There's no mistake about that, for it was a woman's scream that we heard just before we broke in the doors."

"Me think cellal—catchee cellal, we catchee birdees," observed the Chinese.



"I haven't noticed any signs of a cellar," the police captain remarked, "but we'll take a look for it now."

But the search was a fruitless one.

There wasn't any cellar under the house, and the narrow, secret passage, only a couple of feet wide and situated right by the side of the chimney, which was built in the middle of the house, in the center of the partition which divided the two rooms, had been completely obliterated by the results of the explosion.

The dynamite cartridge had been placed exactly under the center of the house, half-way up the stairs, and as a natural consequence all traces of the secret passage were destroyed.

Thanks to the light offered by the moon, the searchers were enabled to make a careful scrutiny, but, as we have said, not a vestige of a cellar could they discover.

This was not surprising, for there wasn't any such thing under the house, as we have said.

At last the Chinaman shook his head, as if in despair.

"No cellar, John, eh?" said the police captain.

"No cellar," he responded.

"I tell you it was just as I suggested in the beginning. The cuss had a secret door somewhere in one of the side-walls; of course, as the house is blown to smithereens, there isn't any chance for us to find any signs of it."

"He dared us to break into the house just so as to get a chance to blow us up with this infernal dynamite, and the moment he saw that we meant business he lit his fuse and skipped out."

"I can't say that I admire the job that the scoundrel put up on us, yet I must admit that it was as neat a racket as I ever saw worked."

"Me no like catchee on such racket," Chin Chin remarked, with a wise shake of the head, and then he waved his hand as if he meant to give a parting salutation and began to move off.

"Are you off, John?" asked the captain.

"Me playee dog—smell 'em, bet you!" responded the Celestial, with one of his enormous grins, and then started off up the river.

"That fellow is a mystery," remarked the police captain to the sergeant, as they gazed after the departing Chinaman.

"At first I thought he was a detective in disguise, and I tumbled to him at once, but he wouldn't have it. That was on our way up here, and then I came to the opinion that he was a real, genuine Chinaman, and if he is, which I don't doubt now, I guess it's the first instance on record of one of the yellow heathens ever going into the detective business—the first in this country, anyway."

"He's a thorough bloodhound, though, captain; there ain't no discount on that," the sergeant observed, and the captain was of the same opinion.

Leaving the police to return to the city with their dead and wounded, and the Chinaman to follow on the trail of the fugitives, we will return to the desperadoes and see how it was that they managed to escape with their victim.

Captain Pelican had timed the cartridge so as to give his party time to escape.

Twenty feet from the stairway the passage turned abruptly to the right, and after they had passed this corner they were safe from danger, as the force of the dynamite found a vent in the open space above.

The passage led directly to the barn, and the fugitives reached the little secret vault under that primitive structure just as the explosion took place.

The power of the shock was felt by them, and it came with sufficient force to almost knock them down.

"Aha!" cried Captain Pelican, in fierce joy, "that means the destruction of our enemies!"

"If this infernal hound of a Chinaman is only blown into a thousand pieces, I shall be supremely happy."

By this time the girl had relapsed into insensibility, a state produced by the rough treatment which she had received.

The outlaw captain perceived this and remarked that it "was a lucky thing," for now there wouldn't be any danger of her giving an outcry.

A narrow stairway, similar to the one which had existed at the other end of the passage, led up into the barn.

Conkey Bill ascended, and after ascertaining that the way of escape was open, notified the other.

So, while the police were busy amid the ruins, striving to rescue their comrades who had been caught in the fiendish trap, the three desperadoes stole forth carrying the insensible girl with them, and favored by the darkness succeeded in leaving the neighborhood of the scene of the tragedy without exciting the suspicions of the man-hunters.

So far Captain Pelican had decidedly the best of the game.

#### CHAPTER XVIII. THE RAILROAD KING.

CHANGE we now the scene of our tale, allow Old Father Time to make two leaps from sun to sun, ere we again go on with our narrative.

And now, instead of the wild and rugged country along the rock-ribbed Palisades, we'll

ask the reader to accompany us to the elegantly fitted-up offices of Emanuel Carrickford, the great railway king, situated on lower Broadway within a musket-shot of New York's great commercial artery, world-renowned Wall street.

The money king was seated in his private office, which was furnished in the most luxurious style, and through the plate-glass windows he commanded a view of the busy street without.

In person, this millionaire—twenty or thirty times over, as both friend and foe asserted—was not of so striking or commanding an appearance as to excite attention among men to whom he was unknown.

In fact, he was a rather common-place, everyday sort of man.

He was a little below the medium height, slightly built, with a pleasant face, shaded by a bushy brown beard and lit up by a pair of keen, gray eyes.

There wasn't anything foxy or shrewd-looking about him.

He appeared like a man who possessed an average amount of common sense, but it would have taken a prophet indeed to have predicted from his general appearance that he was one of the great men of the world—a king among his fellow-men, as truly as though he had been born to the people and been anointed with the holy oil with which the spiritual ruler christens the temporal one.

Some folks declared that it was luck and not brains which had given him his money, but that he succeeded where other men failed no one could gainsay.

It was the old story.

Napoleon didn't win his battles; it was his marshals.

It was not Grant who led the hosts of the Union to victory, but general this, that and the other who served under him.

So with the great railroad king; it was Judge Blank or Colonel Dash who engineered the wonderful schemes, or some other gentleman associated with the millionaire, but somehow Carrickford always managed to get the lion's share of the profits, and if that isn't a proof of genius what is?

It seems to me that the man who is skillful enough to get other people to plan and execute the work and then contrives to pocket the profits himself, is really talented.

With the money king sat a man who was the direct opposite to Carrickford in every personal respect.

He was a blonde-bearded, blue-eyed, broad-shouldered giant of a fellow, imposing enough in his personal appearance to be an emperor at the very least.

This was General Daniel Binkerton, the head of the finest and most extensive private detective concern that has ever existed in this country, or in any other, for that matter, for there isn't anything of the kind worthy to rank with it in the known world.

In the course of his extensive business the railroad king had often found it necessary to call upon Binkerton, and when this dreadful blow fell upon him the chief of the famous private detective system was immediately summoned.

As we have said, this day of which we write was two days after the one on the night of which the events detailed in our last chapter occurred.

As a rule, the police authorities of New York think it desirable to keep all important criminal matters as secret as possible until they feel certain that the ends of justice will not be defeated by premature publicity.

The reporters attached to the city newspapers, on the other hand, are always anxious to publish anything that they think will be of interest to the readers of their respective journals, and so there is always a struggle between the police authorities and the newspaper "fellers" when any important criminal matter is on the carpet.

The men at head-quarters try to keep back all the important things which they deem had best not be given to the public, and the reporters do their best to get at the bottom facts.

And as a general thing the newspaper men don't get "left" often, to use the vernacular.

In the case of the destruction of the old house, though the first idea of the police authorities was to hush the matter up, yet the calamity was too great a one to be kept secret, and so on the following day all the particulars of the affair were given to the public.

Thanks to an unknown Chinaman, who had put himself in communication with the superintendent of police, a squad of the Metropolitans had been conducted to a lonely retreat on the top of the Palisades, four fellows of evil repute had been captured and some others hunted into an old house, which the police stormed, urged onward by the scream of a girl within the dwelling whom they believed to be the abducted daughter of the great railroad king, Emanuel Carrickford.

Then followed the details of the explosion, and the account wound up with the assurance that the police were hot on the track of the desperadoes, and their capture, and the release of the girl, might be expected at any moment.

General Binkerton had been absent from the

city, and this was his first meeting with the millionaire since the tragedy on the crest of the Palisades had taken place.

The general had just entered the office and taken a chair at the moment we introduce the pair to our readers' notice.

General Binkerton had only arrived in the city an hour before, and on arriving at his office had found there an earnest message from Carrickford; in obedience to the request of the railroad king he had gone immediately to see him.

"Aha, you've returned, I see!" exclaimed Carrickford, in the nervous, impetuous way customary to him.

"They sent word from your office that you were expected this morning."

"Yes, I've been away on some important business for the last three days."

"I presume of course that you are aware of all the particulars of that affair on the Palisades?"

"Oh, yes, I read the accounts published in the daily journals, and then my business manager here got at some facts which the reporters did not get hold of."

"I went to police head-quarters myself, but the superintendent said he could not give me any particulars beyond those already published," said Carrickford. "There was the usual mysterious intimation, of course, that the police were in possession of important clews which it would not do to make public, but the superintendent said that in his opinion there wasn't much doubt the gang would be captured and my daughter restored to me before the week was out."

"Of course, of course!" the great private detective exclaimed, contemptuously.

"That is the old jargon, and the folks up to head-quarters give it out so often that they ought to have it by heart by this time."

"The police always have important clews which it will not do to make public—they are always on the right track and in two or three days they will have their game dead to rights; but, somehow, to use the slang of the streets, they 'slip up' on it dreadfully in nine cases out of ten."

"But what seemed to puzzle them most at police head-quarters was this mysterious Chinaman who has figured so prominently in the case," Carrickford remarked.

"They got the idea into their heads that he was some private detective employed by me, and although the police captain, who was in command of the expedition, insisted upon it that the man was a real Chinaman, and not a detective in disguise, the 'powers that be' pooch-pooched the idea and were firm in their belief that it was not a Chinese but a white man disguised as a Celestial."

"Certainly, of course, that's the right way to get at the truth!" exclaimed the general, impatiently. "First form a theory and then warp the facts to suit it, and if the facts don't suit, why, so much the worse for the facts."

"The idea that the men at head-quarters, who had not seen this mysterious Chinaman at all, should believe their knowledge of the fellow to be better than the police captain who had been with him, 'cheek by jowl,' is one which to me is most stupendously ridiculous."

"Yes; that is exactly the way I looked at the matter," the railroad king observed.

"But you see they had run away with the idea that the Chinaman was a detective disguised, and they were not willing to look at the matter in any other light."

"They supposed that I knew who the Chinaman was and all about him, and were very much astonished when I told them that I knew no more about the matter than they did."

"Then they questioned me as to whether I had employed any private detectives in the case and when I told them that you had been retained, they at once came to the conclusion that this Chinaman was one of your men, and I must admit that I thought this was likely to be the case, but when I hurried to your office to see if I could gain any further information, your business-manager said most decidedly that the Chinaman was not one of your force, and he was as much in the dark as to who the man was and why he came to interest himself in the case as anybody else."

"That was the truth," the general added.

"Then I surmised that possibly the solution of the riddle was that the man was some private spy of your own whom you had employed to work up the case, and you had reasons for keeping the matter a secret even from your own men."

The detective chief shook his head.

"Your suspicion is wide of the mark. I know no more of the fellow than you do, but from the accounts given I am of the opinion that there isn't any doubt about the man being a real Chinaman, attracted by the reward offered by you."

"And there isn't any doubt, too, that the fellow, greenhorn though he seems to be, has done as good a piece of detective work as has been performed recently."

"It seems to be absolutely certain that he struck the right clew, and came within an ace of rescuing your daughter, but was baffled by the wily desperadoes who have abducted her."



## CHAPTER XIX.

## THE MOTIVE.

CARRICKFORD pondered over the matter for a few moments.

He was not prepared for the information made known to him by the veteran detective, for since he had first heard of the mysterious Chinaman he had been cheered up by the belief that it was one of Binkerton's detectives, and his child would surely be rescued.

"It is really the strangest affair, take it for all and all, I think that I ever heard of," the railroad king observed thoughtfully.

"Yes, that is true enough; it is like a page taken out of one of the old-time mysteries, dating back to the dark ages," the general remarked.

"The villain who planned the affair must be a master-hand in crime, or else my child could never have been taken from my mansion in the manner that she was."

"Mr. Carrickford," said the detective chief, abruptly, "when you call upon a man in my line of business and intrust a case to his hands, you know it is just like calling in a parson, a doctor, or a lawyer, the men of which professions are intrusted with more secrets than all the rest of mankind combined."

"Oh, yes, I understand that," responded the other, an inquiring look upon his face as though he did not exactly understand what the general was driving at.

"Now this affair of yours has some mysterious features about it that I don't understand at all."

"Mr. Carrickford, don't be offended if I ask you a few plain questions."

"Certainly not."

"Since our first interview, which, as you will probably remember, was an extremely brief one, as I was obliged to leave town to attend to some business of such importance that it could not be postponed, and which required my personal attention, I have given a great deal of time to reflection in regard to your case, and I find some things about it that puzzle me."

"Now, if you will allow me to cross-examine you, just as if you were a witness on the stand, possibly I may be able to ascertain some facts which will be of service to me."

"My dear general, there isn't anything in regard to the matter which I have the slightest motive in the world for wishing to conceal, so question all you like, and you may rest assured I will answer to the best of my ability."

"In the first place, then, are you absolutely certain that your daughter has been abducted?"

"Is it not possible that she may have had a lover unknown to you, and that admirer being some fellow whom she felt certain you would never receive as a son-in-law, she fled with him under cover of the night?"

"Oh, it is possible, of course, but not probable," replied the millionaire, with a quiet smile.

He did not feel at all offended at the suggestion, as the general feared would be the case.

Knowing his girl so well, the idea appeared to him to be too absurd to be worthy of any serious notice.

"You don't believe that your daughter's disappearance can be accounted for in that way?"

"Oh, no; I am certain on that point. I have always been a kind and indulgent father, and then, too, I am not blind and have kept a good lookout for my girl."

"I am positive that there has never been a chance for her to form a secret attachment for any one, and if there had been any such thing, I am certain she would have consulted me before taking so decided a step as to elope from her father's roof."

"The reason I asked the question was because the more I have studied over the matter the more puzzled I have been to see how the girl could have been carried off without the slightest clew being left as to how the job was performed."

"The abduction could not have been done by outside parties without aid from some one in the house."

"Yes, that thought occurred to me, and ever since the affair occurred I have been attentively watching the inmates of my house to see if I could fix suspicion upon any one of them."

"Would it not be a good idea for your men, general, to establish an espionage over them in the French style?" the millionaire suggested.

The detective chief laughed.

"My dear Mr. Carrickford, that was the first order that I gave after you put the case in my hands," he said.

"And no results so far?"

"None at all; the party, or parties, are on their guard, evidently, and are not to be easily trapped."

"But now, assuming that your daughter has been carried off, what is the object of the movement?"

Carrickford shook his head.

"Such a daring and dangerous feat as that is not performed without good and sufficient reasons. A man doesn't risk the State prison, you know, without an object."

"I have given the subject much reflection," the railroad king observed, after a slight pause.

"And as far as I can see, such a deed can only be prompted by two motives."

"Exactly, exactly!" exclaimed the detective, with an approving nod.

"Your thoughts, I see, have been running in the same groove as my own."

"Two motives lie at the back of such a crime as this, and two only."

"Yes, that is the conclusion I reached," Carrickford observed.

"Avarice or revenge," said the detective.

"That is my thought."

"We have two prominent cases in this country, and right in our own time, where desperate men have dared desperate risks in hopes of reaching a rich reward."

"I presume I am familiar with the cases to which you refer," Carrickford observed.

"The abduction of the boy Charley Ross and the stealing of Stewart's body?" questioned Binkerton.

"Yes, those are the two which rose up in my mind when I spoke."

"In both of those cases money was at the bottom of the trouble," continued the detective.

"The boy was stolen away from his home by a gang of able and unscrupulous ruffians, with the idea of forcing his father to pay a heavy ransom for his recovery."

"If you remember, the doers of the deed did attempt to open negotiations, but so great a hue and cry was made about the affair that the scoundrels became frightened lest they should be entrapped, and kept constantly on the move until the child died, and so their schemes came to naught."

"There has never been in my mind the slightest doubt in regard to the fate of the boy, or to the identity of the men who carried him off."

"The shot-gun which killed the prime mover of the scheme, when engaged in an attempt at housebreaking on Long Island, cheated the hangman of a victim, for in the long run the scoundrel most certainly would have come to the gallows."

"Your conclusions are exactly the same as my own in the matter," the millionaire remarked.

"The Stewart case is still wrapped in mystery, and whether the body of the great merchant was ever recovered or not is a fact known only to those persons immediately concerned and the confidential agents employed by them in the business."

But as Binkerton spoke there was a knowing twinkle in his keen blue eyes which seemed to say that he could impart a great deal more information in regard to the matter if he was free to speak.

"In both these cases avarice was the motive. Now it is possible that your daughter has been abducted with the idea of forcing you to pay a heavy ransom for her release, but the thing really seems improbable, for, Mr. Carrickford, to steal away a child like Charley Ross, or a lifeless body as in the Stewart case, is a light and easy task compared to abducting a healthy young woman like your daughter."

"The child was not old enough to give much trouble, the lifeless bones were easily concealed, but when it comes to hiding away from all the world, so that no clew to her whereabouts can become public, a girl of eighteen, beautiful, attractive and stylish, I tell you it is no easy job."

"Yes, so it seems to me."

"And if that is the solution of the mystery, it is either the act of a crank who don't know what he is doing, or of a man who is a bigger and more consummate rascal than has come to the surface for a long time."

"And the other motive of which you spoke, revenge?" said the railroad king, a strange expression upon his face.

"Yes, revenge is sometimes more powerful than avarice," Binkerton remarked.

"Of course, in the large and varied business ventures in which you have been engaged during the past twenty or thirty years you have undoubtedly made many enemies."

"The rise of one man to prominence is built, perforce, upon the downfall and ruin of many others, forced to the wall by the opposition against which they were unable to contend."

"Perhaps you have made personal enemies, men who consider that you have wantonly trampled upon them and who would only be too glad to injure you in any possible way."

"Yes, yes, I have thought of that," the millionaire responded, slowly, and in a low voice, while a troubled expression appeared upon his face.

"There is a skeleton in every man's closet," says the old adage, and in this case it really looked as if the detective was coming close to the recess wherein Emanuel Carrickford hid his skeleton.

Binkerton surveyed the troubled face of the great railroad king attentively for a moment.

Of course it was easy for a man of his wonderful discernment to see that his words had struck home.

"Is there any one particular man above all other men whom you suspect to be a mortal foe—a man who would not be apt to hesitate at any

method of striking a blow at you which you would feel clear to your heart's core?"

"Yes, there is such a man."

"Good! now we are on the right track, I fancy!" the detective exclaimed, in a tone denoting great satisfaction.

"Give me his name and pedigree, and the chances are that I will be able to make some progress in this case."

"It is my nephew, Harry Carrickford."

## CHAPTER XX

## THE STORY OF HARRY CARRICKFORD.

THE detective leaned back in his chair and plainly exhibited the surprise which he felt at the announcement.

"Your nephew!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, my nephew, Harry Carrickford," the railroad king reported.

"Of course I am not so intimately acquainted with your family affairs as I might be, but by common report I am pretty well posted in regard to you, and I have always understood that you hadn't any near relatives."

"That is the truth now," Carrickford explained. "But ten years ago I had a brother—a brother who was some six years my senior and named Henry."

"At that time my interests were chiefly in the West, and my head-quarters were at St. Louis."

"Now you speak of it, it strikes me that somewhere out West I have heard of a Henry Carrickford, but I hadn't any idea that he was your brother."

"He was as totally unlike me in every respect almost as can well be imagined," Carrickford continued.

"Had very little head for business, and not the least bit of drive or push about him—no enterprise at all."

"But he was perfectly trustworthy, a man who attended strictly to his own business, and so cautious in his nature that it used to be a common saying among his friends that Henry Carrickford was so secretive that he never let his left hand know what his right was doing."

"That is a family characteristic, I should say," the detective remarked, with a quiet smile.

"Yes, I presume I am not disposed to be unduly communicative."

"Well, my brother served me as a sort of a confidential clerk, and in that capacity was the right man in the right place."

"In fact we had always got along splendidly together from childhood, for though Henry was six years my senior, he always understood that I had the better head of the two and was content to follow my lead."

"We never had but one serious trouble, and that occurred some twenty years ago, just as I had made my mark in the world and was beginning to be looked upon as one of the coming men."

"Henry was a confirmed old bachelor; from his early boyhood he had seemed to have no liking for female society—in fact he was looked upon as a woman-hater, and he often laughed at the idea of a man tying himself down to the cares of a wife and family when he could live free of all such incumbrances."

"You can judge of my astonishment, then, when one day my brother came to the office, leading a ten-year-old boy by the hand, and announced to me that he was going to adopt him as a son."

"Naturally I remonstrated against such folly. You see I had got in the habit of talking to my brother just exactly as if I was his father and natural guardian, and as a rule he paid the most respectful attention to my words."

"I can understand that, of course," Binkerton remarked.

"Your stronger mind controls his weak one."

"Yes, that is the idea but on this occasion I could not move him from his resolution in the least, he was as firm as a rock."

"The boy was an ugly little chap, although he seemed to be smart enough."

"And when I told my brother this, saying that I couldn't conceive what he could see in the boy to induce him to adopt him, he looked me straight in the eye and in a peculiar way that I shall never forget answered:

"When I look in that boy's features I can see the face of his dead mother. She was an angel on earth and now one above, I trust."

"Then for the first time I realized that there was a secret in my brother's life which I had never been invited to share."

"I see, I see!" exclaimed the detective, deeply interested in the story.

"It was the only time in his life that he ever stood out against me in any important matter, and I yielded; nor did I question him about the matter, as I perceived he was not inclined to confide in me."

"He adopted the sallow-faced youngster as his son."

"Years passed on, the boy grew up a fine, vigorous fellow, for all his ugliness, and with a decided propensity for all sorts of athletic sports. When he was about twenty he could outrow, outwrestle and outrun any of his companions, a capital rider, an expert swordsman, a crack



shot with both pistol and rifle, and with the gloves it was said he was the best amateur boxer in the city."

"A regular Admirable Crichton!" Binkerton remarked.

"I often warned my brother that his son's indulgence in this sort of thing would bring him to ruin in the end, but he was really proud of his accomplishments."

"I have neglected to state that the boy was called Henry, the same as his adopted father, but in order to make a distinction between the two the youngster was always called Harry."

"When he completed his education he came into the office, and although I will admit that I never believed in the boy and was always prejudiced against him, yet he made a very decent clerk, and gradually rose, step by step, until he became his father's assistant."

"I was really beginning to believe that the boy wouldn't be a disgrace to my brother as I had predicted, when a circumstance happened which proved that I had judged the young man only too well."

"My brother fell sick all of a sudden—a low fever which confined him to his bed, and in his absence I had occasion to look in the books and examine the accounts."

"You can judge of my surprise when I found that through a system of false entries my brother's precious hopeful had helped himself to some ten thousand dollars."

"The promptitude with which I landed that young man in jail was wonderful for I was stung to the quick by his base ingratitude, not to me, for I had never done anything for him, but to my noble-hearted brother, who had saved the young viper from going to a poor-house and had brought him up like a gentleman."

"What excuse did he offer?"

"None in the world, and he confronted me with the assurance of a hardened criminal."

"I am not guilty, sir," he said, "and if I was on my dying bed, I would say as I say now, I have never taken a single penny of your money which I did not honestly earn."

"Of course, of course," I replied. "It is my brother who took the money, and you falsified the books in order to screen him."

"He seemed to be struck dumb at this; and bad as he was, he did not dare to attempt to defend himself in this way, although he might have done so with impunity as far as my poor brother was concerned, for he was helpless with the fever and half the time delirious, so as not to comprehend anything that was going on around him."

"Well, to come to an end, the evidence against the young fellow was conclusive; I was vindictive about the matter, I confess, and the result was he was railroaded into the State Prison in short order."

"The judge was a personal friend of mine, and knowing the circumstances of the case, gave the fellow as severe a sentence as he could, and he told him so when he sentenced him, for, as he said, a baser case of ingratitude he had never heard of in all his experience, and he felt it his duty to impose on him the full penalty of the law."

"And that was?"

"Confinement in the State Prison for ten years at hard labor."

"That was a pretty tough sentence," the detective observed.

"Yes; but no more than the rascal deserved," the millionaire replied, severely.

"I was so incensed against him, not because he had taken the money, but on account of abusing my brother's confidence in the way he had, that I firmly believe if I had had the ordering of his fate in my hands I would have had him hung beyond a doubt."

"After the judge had finished and a dead silence fell upon the court, the fellow spoke, and with as firm a brow as though the matter did not concern him in the least. He said:

"Your honor does not understand the case, and so I pardon your brutal words."

"And then he turned to me, while every mouth in the court-room was agape with wonder."

"Emanuel Carrickford, you have hounded me into the State Prison, although I humbled myself before you and begged for mercy, but you will live to regret the day when you made me your victim."

"At this point the judge, in great indignation, bade the fellow stop and ordered the officers to silence him."

"No need of violence, your honor!" he exclaimed, bold as a lion. "I submit to fate. I am innocent of the crime of which I am accused, as time will prove."

"By this time the officers were at his side, and he sat down."

"That ended the court-room scene."

"He was removed to jail, but before he started for Jefferson City, the location of the State Prison, my brother died, spared the pain of knowing how badly his adopted boy had turned out."

"The news was made known to the convict, and he seemed utterly cast down."

"The next day he started with the officers for Jefferson City."

"On the way there he took advantage of a fa-

vorable moment, made his escape from the dolts who had charge of him, and leaped from the train while going at full speed."

"The cars were stopped as soon as possible, and search made for the prisoner, but no trace of him was ever discovered."

"But I can tell you, Binkerton, his words have haunted me ever since, 'You will live to regret the day when you made me your victim.'"

"Now then the question arises in my mind; was this blow dealt me by Harry Carrickford come back after all these years to avenge the wrong he thinks I did him?"

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE ULTIMATUM.

THE detective pondered over the question for a few minutes before answering.

"Well, I don't know," he said, at last. "It is a difficult point to decide, but from the little I know of the case I should say that it appears to me to be extremely probable that some such man as you have described is at the bottom of the matter."

"It looks more to me like the work of a personal enemy than anything else."

"That is the idea which has haunted me ever since the affair occurred," the railroad king remarked, a dark shadow upon his face.

"I am not much of a believer in presentiments; a man who has led the rough and busy life which has been my lot ever since I was old enough to fight the battle of life on my own account is apt to get all such ideas knocked out of his head at an early stage of the game, but I will admit that from the very beginning I was prejudiced against this Harry Carrickford, and I had a presentiment which I was never able to shake off that he was fated to cause me trouble."

"Very odd these things are, once in a while," the veteran detective observed, with a wise shake of the head.

"I will own that I too in the course of my busy career have had these peculiar ideas take such a hold upon me that it has been impossible to shake them off, and oftentimes by yielding to them I have been able to command success in cases where otherwise the result could only have been failure."

"Possibly it was this feeling that caused me to 'go for' the young man so vigorously when I saw a chance to catch him on the hip."

"I will admit that I did my best to send him to State Prison, and it was through no fault of mine that he escaped a felon's cell."

"He warned me that the day would come when I would regret the part I had taken, and although I suppose I have been threatened in the most insolent manner twenty—possibly fifty times, in the course of my fight with fortune, yet it was the only time that such a threat ever made the least bit of an impression upon me."

"But, general, as I am a living man I assure you I have never forgotten his words in all these years that have elapsed since that time, nor the impressive manner in which they were uttered."

"The scene, with all its particulars, is as vivid in my memory now as though it were only yesterday that it occurred, and many a time when I have had a sleepless night have I lain awake wondering if this young villain was not lurking somewhere in the background preparing to deal me a terrible blow when I should least expect it."

The general was very much impressed by the recital, and remarked:

"This is a regular romance, Mr. Carrickford, but my experience has convinced me that there is a great deal of sound sense in the old saying that truth is stranger than fiction."

"I should not be at all surprised if your surmise, wild as it appears to be, is correct, and that it is to this old-time enemy you are indebted for this terrible blow."

"At any rate I will go ahead on that supposition and do my best to ascertain if this Harry Carrickford is in the city."

"I presume that any description I might furnish would not be of any particular use after all these years," Carrickford remarked.

"Oh, no, it would only be apt to mislead," the detective replied.

"I have my own way of getting at such matters, and I will put some of my best men on the scent at once."

"Whoever did the job must have taken time to spy upon you, and I've no doubt that by a careful and persistent search I shall be able to get on the right track."

Just at this point the clerk whose duty it was to look after the mail entered the room.

"A letter, sir," he said, to the railroad king, "addressed to you, and marked personal and important."

Then delivering the missive into the hands of the millionaire he departed.

"Some fellow wants a loan," Carrickford remarked, as he proceeded to open the envelope, "or else some brilliant genius desires to interest me in some wildcat scheme, and he thinks by marking his letter personal and important he will be certain to reach me and gain my attention."

Within the envelope were two folded sheets of paper, and the railroad king gave utterance to a cry of astonishment as his eyes fell upon the

handwriting inscribed upon the first one he opened.

"It is from my daughter!" he exclaimed.

He perused the brief note eagerly.

The reader being already familiar with it we will not reproduce it.

"My girl is alive and well, but in the hands of a gang of scoundrels who are holding her for a ransom," Carrickford continued, handing the note penned by the girl to the detective, who proceeded to carefully examine it.

Then the millionaire unfolded the second sheet of paper.

In a bold, free "back-hand"—this style of writing evidently adopted for the purpose of disguising the handwriting of the author, a brief note was penned.

"This is from the chief of the gang, evidently," Carrickford observed, as he glanced over the letter, and then he read it aloud.

It ran as follows:

"To Emanuel Carrickford, millionaire, twenty times over, railroad king, monopolist and general tyrant:

"We, the Men of the Black Hand, have in our possession—as you will see by the letter inclosed with this—a treasure belonging to you which you ought to value dearly."

"To us a hundred thousand dollars—which we could devote to charitable purposes—would be more prized."

"If you desire to make the change, negotiations can be conducted through Jacob Kittleman, lawyer, office in Centerstreet, near the Tombs."

"Be in haste if you wish to do business, or else like the Greeks and the mountain chiefs of Asia Minor, we shall be obliged to return your treasure to you piecemeal—first the ears, then the fingers, toes, nose, etc., as a proof that we are men who are not to be trifled with."

There wasn't any signature, and after he had finished reading the letter Carrickford handed it to the detective, while his face was fairly ablaze with anger.

"What do you think of that?" he cried.

"Well, I must say it strikes me that is about the coolest piece of work I have run across for many a long day," the general replied, while he examined the paper carefully.

"A hundred thousand dollars! the infernal scoundrels!" the millionaire cried, his anger at a white heat.

"The Chinaman was on the right scent," the detective observed. "There is hardly a doubt that he did strike the right party, and the girl whom he described as being imprisoned in the cave was your daughter."

"Yes, yes, not the least doubt in the world!" the railroad king observed.

"But would you have believed that those scoundrels would have dared to perpetrate such an outrageous crime?"

"These foreign desperadoes are ugly fellows and are up to all sorts of queer crimes," the detective replied, thoughtfully.

"You are known to be a wealthy man, and these scoundrels thought you would be just the game to strike for blood-money."

"They have set their figure at a pretty high notch, though—a hundred thousand dollars! The scamps are not modest in their demand."

"I would rather give a million to secure the capture of the whole gang!" the railroad king observed, indignantly.

"So would I; I appreciate your feelings on the subject, but I'm afraid these fellows have got you in a tight place, and it may be wise for you to treat with them."

"No, no, I cannot bring myself to yield to the demands of these robbers!" cried Carrickford, springing to his feet indignantly and striding up and down the apartment in a state of high excitement.

"A million did I say? Upon my word, general, as I am a living man, I believe I would rather give ten million than allow these impudent scoundrels to rob me of a paltry hundred thousand."

"Exactly, exactly; as I said before I can appreciate your feeling in regard to the matter," the detective remarked in his cool way; but in my profession, Mr. Carrickford, everything would go to the deuce if we allowed sentiment to interfere with business."

"Surely you wouldn't counsel me to yield to this infamous demand?" the millionaire asked in amazement.

"That depends entirely upon circumstances," the great detective replied.

"If after mature deliberation and profound consideration, I can see no other way to restore your daughter to your arms, then, most decidedly I shall advise you to negotiate with the scoundrels."

"Ah, but can we not hunt the rascals down?" the railroad king cried.

"The amount of money required is not for a moment to be taken into consideration; I don't care what it costs!"

"Oh, I understand that; but there is a point which I fear you have not considered."

"You must remember that your daughter is helpless in the power of this gang and they threaten terrible things in case the ransom they demand is not paid quickly."

"The scoundrels would surely never dare to carry out their threats!" the millionaire exclaimed, his face paling at the bare idea.



"My dear Mr. Carrickford, men desperate enough to abduct your daughter in this high-handed manner will surely not hesitate to murder her if you do not yield to their demands."

The millionaire seized his hat.

"You are right; let us go to this lawyer immediately!" he cried.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE CRIMINAL LAWYER.

"SOFTLY, softly, let us make haste slowly," said the detective chief in his quiet, soothing way.

"Let us examine the ground before we make a move so as to know exactly what we are doing."

"You are right—quite right!" exclaimed Carrickford, throwing his hat upon a table and sinking again into his chair.

"This affair has so completely upset me that I hardly believe I know what I am doing."

"Quite natural under the circumstances; I too am a father, Mr. Carrickford, and I can well understand how you feel about the matter," the other replied in a tone which fully betrayed how deep was the interest he took in the affair.

"There isn't anything to be gained though by us acting hastily. Let us be sure of the ground before we go ahead."

"There isn't the least danger of their attempting any violence toward the girl until you have refused to treat with them."

"Do you happen to know this lawyer, this Jacob Kittleman?"

"No, never heard of him before in my life."

"That shows that you do not pay any particular attention to the criminal columns in the newspapers."

"I glance over the police reports, of course, but that is about all."

"This lawyer I do not know personally, but by reputation I am well acquainted with him."

"He is quite a noted fellow in his way, although seldom employed in anything but petty criminal cases."

"Not exactly a shyster, yet only a few degrees above that grade. The firm of which he is the leading partner is Kittleman and Kadis, and I don't suppose that there are any two men in the city who have a larger acquaintance with the criminal classes than these two men."

"Whenever a 'crook' gets in the clutches of the law he sends for this firm to come and defend him as speedily as possible."

"Both of the fellows are really able men in their way, and what they don't know about the quirks and quibbles of the law is not worth knowing."

"But the idea that any firm of lawyers making any pretense to respectability at all should consent to act as agents or go-betweens for such scoundrels as these villains who have stolen my child is monstrous."

"Yes, I don't exactly understand that myself. I shouldn't think they would do it, but through the lawyers we may get a clew to the gang, so suppose we go and see them?"

"Although I am at the head of a pretty extensive detective bureau, yet still, personally, I am not widely known, and as I have never come in contact with these lawyer chaps in any way, I think the chances are good that neither one of the two will recognize me."

"You can introduce me as your business manager—Mr. Gordon, say; that name will do as well as any—Mr. James Gordon."

"We need not commit ourselves, you know. Just go on a sort of a fishing-excursion to see what we can discover."

"A capital idea!" and the millionaire was on his feet, and reaching for his hat in an instant.

The detective followed his example, but in a decidedly more leisurely manner.

Taking a cab, the two were driven to the Tombs, but in obedience to the general's order, the cab halted on the Elm-street side, the passengers alighted, and the cabman was ordered to wait for their return.

"It is better for us to walk from here to the lawyer's office than to have the cab drive up to the door," the detective explained, as the two proceeded to walk around the massive pile, the New York city prison, known by the ominous name of the Tombs.

"The appearance of the cab in Center street would be apt to excite attention, and that is exactly what we don't want."

"It is my policy always to keep as shady as possible."

"A wise rule," commented the millionaire.

The office of Kittleman and Kadis was situated in a dingy building only a musket-shot from the ancient Egyptian building, which is probably better known throughout the land than all the rest of the prisons combined.

They were on the first floor, a store having been turned into an office, the window and doors covered with screens so arranged that while the persons within could command a view of the street it was impossible for passers-by to stare into the apartment.

The room into which the two gentlemen made their way was plainly furnished, a large round table in the center upon which were half a dozen newspapers, a horsehair-covered sofa and a few chairs, evidently spoils from some auction,

to judge from their ancient appearance and well-worn condition.

At the end of the apartment was a stout partition, which, running across the store, divided it in the center.

In the partition were two doors.

The one on the right bore the inscrip-

"JACOB KITTLEMAN,

Private Office."

That on the left a sign reading:

"BENJAMIN KADIS,

Private Office."

A thick-headed office boy, a lad of twelve or fourteen, but bearing that look of precociousness common to youths whose wits have been sharpened by the street life of a great city, was in charge of the front office and received the two gentlemen.

Perceiving that the visitors were of a far superior class to that which usually frequented the legal den, the lad hastened to greet them with most elaborate politeness.

"Take a cheer, gents, and make yourself comfortable," he said, pushing two of the ancient veterans to the front.

"On business, I s'pose, and which one is it?" he rattled on, without giving the visitors a chance to say anything.

"If it is B. Kadis, Esquire, it is N. G. He won't be here for a couple of hours, and I stand ready to lay any sport two to one that it will be nearer to four hours than two before he shows, for he's off on a little racket with some of the City Hall heelers, and they're gay boys, you bet, when they sail in to paint the town red."

The boy paused for a moment to take breath, and the general took advantage of the opportunity.

"It is Mr. Kittleman whom we desire to see."

"That's all O. K.; he's in. This way, gents."

And then, with a flourish, he ushered them into the private apartment of the senior member of the firm.

The lawyer, who was "taking it comfortably," lying back in his office-chair, with his feet on his desk and a cigar between his teeth, rose to receive the new-comers.

Kittleman was of medium size, with a rather fat, unmeaning face, but for all that there was a foxy expression to it.

He had a bland, oily way with him, and a perpetual smile sat ever on his features—a smile which, like a mask, kept his face from betraying his thoughts.

"Glad to see you, gentlemen," he said, hastening to place chairs for his visitors.

"This is an unexpected pleasure to be honored by the company of two such gentlemen as yourselves; my poor office is not used to the presence of such magnates."

This was a surprise, for it was evident that the lawyer had recognized both of them.

"You know us, it seems," the detective remarked.

"Oh, yes, General Binkerton, a man of your reputation cannot expect to escape recognition in a city which has often gazed in wonder at your clever exploits; and as for Mr. Carrickford," he continued, with a polite bow to that worthy, "the man must be a hermit indeed not to recognize at first glance the greatest financier of the age."

Both of the gentlemen acknowledged the compliment, then seated themselves, and as they did so the lawyer remarked:

"And may I inquire, gentlemen, to what I am indebted for the pleasure of this visit?"

The detective and the millionaire exchanged glances.

Why did the lawyer wish to pretend ignorance?

"I supposed you would be prepared for Mr. Carrickford's coming," the general said.

"Upon my word I had no more idea of seeing Mr. Carrickford than of receiving a visit from the man in the moon!" Kittleman declared.

"You are aware, of course, of the disappearance of Mr. Carrickford's daughter?"

"Certainly, and I can assure you, Mr. Carrickford, that you have my heartfelt sympathy. I am a parent also, Mr. Carrickford, and I can understand how a father feels when a beloved child is ruthlessly torn from him."

"And is that why you are interesting yourself in this matter?" the detective asked, sharply.

A look of blank amazement appeared on the lawyer's face, and if it was assumed it was admirably done.

"I beg your pardon, I don't really understand what you mean."

The general's answer to this was to put the two letters that the millionaire had received that morning into his hands.

The lawyer perused them carefully.

"This is infamous—truly infamous!" he exclaimed in virtuous indignation.

"And I trust you will believe me, gentlemen, when I assure you that I know absolutely nothing in regard to this matter, and that no one has ever approached me in regard to it in any way whatsoever."

"Possibly some of your clients may have had a hand in the affair," the detective suggested.

"That is possible, of course," the lawyer admitted. "It would be sheer folly for me to attempt to deny that I have acted as counsel for some of the biggest scoundrels who have ever slipped through the hangman's rope; but for all that, I know nothing about this, nor to my knowledge have I ever had anything to do with any member of a Socialistic band, as this one seems to be."

"That is out of my line entirely."

"But, if this is the case, why do they refer Mr. Carrickford to you?"

"That is fully as great a mystery to me as it can possibly be to you."

"It is evident they intend to use you as a go-between," Carrickford suggested.

"I shall decline to be so used—unless, indeed," exclaimed the lawyer, suddenly, as though it was an afterthought, "you think I can be of any service to you in the matter."

"If so, pray command me and I will gladly do all in my power to aid you in any possible way."

The detective saw the game at once.

The shrewd lawyer was not going to get himself into trouble by acting for the abductors, but he would act as the railroad king's agent.

This was a horse of quite another color.

"Very well, then, consider yourself retained on our side," said the general.

"I shall be delighted," responded the lawyer.

"You will probably hear from the parties soon, and when the scheme develops advise me."

And then the two departed, the lawyer accompanying them to the door, paying all possible respect and acting generally as though he considered that he had got hold of a good thing.

When the door closed behind the pair, Kittleman returned again to his private office, saying to the boy as he passed through the outer apartment:

"I've some important letters to write, so if any one comes I won't be visible for half an hour."

"I'm fly, judge," responded the youth.

Kittleman reëntered his sanctum, locked the door carefully behind him, sat down to his desk, placed a sheet of paper upon it, took up a pen and began to write.

"I've had a bite," he traced upon the paper, and then a slight noise attracted his attention, and looking up, to his astonishment he beheld a grinning, almond-eyed Chinaman standing at his elbow.

"Where the deuce did you come from?" he cried, amazed.

"Me washee-washee," responded the intruder.

"Me comeetopside stleet, catchee Melican man's washee, washee, alle samee Ilishman."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### A DEXTROUS MOVEMENT.

THE lawyer was completely mystified by this sudden and unexpected appearance for he could not understand how the man had managed to get into the room.

He was certain that he had locked the door leading into the outward apartment after returning from seeing his visitor depart, and how in the name of all that was wonderful this grinning wretch of a Chinaman managed to get into the room was a most incomprehensible mystery.

From where he sat he could plainly distinguish that the bolt of the lock was in its socket, there being a slight crack which permitted this to be seen.

Clearly then the intruder could not have made his entree through the locked door, and he could not have been concealed in the apartment for there wasn't any place in the apartment big enough to afford hiding-room for a good-sized cat.

"You rascal, how did you get in here?" demanded the lawyer, wrathfully.

"Thlough dool!" responded the Celestial, placidly, apparently not at all disturbed by the anger of the other.

"Dool! what do you mean by dool?"

"Dool, thele?" and the Chinaman pointed to a side door which led into the entry back of the main stairs.

This door was wont to be utilized by the lawyer as a means of retreat when persons whom he did not desire to see made their appearance in the front office.

But this door was always kept locked and the key reposed in the little man's pocket.

The statement of the intruder then that he had come through this door seemed ridiculous.

"You're an infernal liar, you didn't come through that door!" exclaimed the lawyer, jumping to his feet and hastening to the door.

"Me no lie—me chulch Chinaman—no tell lie, alle samee Melican man," protested the heathen.

To the amazement of the lawyer, he found, upon examination, that the door was unlocked, so it was plain that the intruder had spoken the truth.

The Chinaman had found his way into the private office through the side door.

"Upon my life this is the most mysterious affair," Kittleman muttered. "I was sure I locked that door the last time I used it."

"Why, that was three days ago—how on earth



did I happen to neglect locking it, and it must have been open ever since too.

"If some of my clients had only have known of this they would have cleaned out these offices as slick as a whistle."

Then he drew the key from his pocket, locked the door, returned to his desk, and motioned the Chinaman to go.

"Get out!" he exclaimed, briefly, taking his pen in hand again.

"How 'bout washee washee? me boss washee, cheap as dilt!" protested the Celestial.

"No, no, get out; don't want any washing done," and again the lawyer bent to his work.

The Chinaman looked at the paper and grinned broader than ever.

"Gottee bite, catchee fish, hey? Me catchee fish alle samee 'Melican man."

And then the grin upon the face of the speaker seemed to extend from ear to ear.

"Get out, you scoundrel, or I'll kick you into the street!" exclaimed Kittleman, annoyed.

"Chinaman go—go pleety quick."

And as he spoke he moved a couple of steps away, a look of apprehension coming over his face.

"Say, 'Melican man dlop dollee-bill—give Chinaman two bitts for tellee?"

And the Celestial pointed to the floor on the other side of the lawyer's chair from where he stood.

It was the old device, and one that seldom fails, for the lawyer, caught in the trap, turned sideways to look down at the floor.

This afforded the intruder the opportunity he desired.

With lightning-like rapidity he drew a short sand-club from beneath his flowing overgarment and dealt Kittleman a terrible blow on the side of the head, felling him to the floor like a log.

The noise made by the falling body was but slight, the distance to the floor being small.

But slight as it was the Chinaman—who, as the reader has probably surmised, was no other than Chin Chin—stole rapidly with noiseless steps to the door which led to the outer apartment, and bending down until his ear reached the key-hole listened intently.

It was his intention to learn whether the noise made by the falling body had been heard in the main office, and if so, if it had excited any attention.

A few moments' observation satisfied him that the noise had not been noticed by the office-boy without.

And this was for the best of all reasons—the boy was not there, nor had he been for some few minutes.

Just after the lawyer had given orders that he must not be disturbed and had locked himself in his office, a horse attached to a carriage had fallen down in the street right opposite to the office, and the boy had hied him to the street, eager to view the scene from a new standpoint, and at the same time encourage the men busy about the unfortunate animal with his counsel, a proceeding which, strange to say, was resented by the others in the most insulting manner; but the boy, having the gift of gab, as the saying is, held his own amazingly well.

To this circumstance it was that neither the loud words used by the lawyer when he discovered the presence of the intruder in his private office, nor his fall when so violently assaulted by him excited any attention in the outer apartment.

Satisfied that no alarm had been given, the wily Celestial returned to his victim.

From some secret pocket in his blue overjacket he produced a silken rope and a pear-shaped rubber gag.

Lifting the senseless form of the lawyer from the floor he placed him in the chair which he had occupied, bracing him up against the desk.

Then, with wonderful dexterity, with the silken cord the Chinaman bound the legs of the lawyer at the ankles so that it was impossible for him to move those limbs at all.

Then the cord was carried to the arms and they were fastened from the elbows downward, being brought together in front of the body, so that while the right hand could be used the left one and the arms were of no more use to their owner than if they did not belong to the body.

And then lastly the gag was fastened securely in the mouth of Kittleman so that it was impossible for him to utter a sound.

When this task was accomplished the Chinaman stole to the side door which led into the entry, and drawing a skeleton-key from his pocket inserted it in the lock, evidently so as to have an avenue of escape open in case a hasty departure became desirable.

It was plain now how the wily Chinese had gained admission to the apartment.

He had played the spy at the door during the interview which had taken place between the lawyer and his two visitors and when Kittleman had accompanied them to the outer apartment, had taken advantage of the absence of the lawyer from his private office to unlock the door so as to secure a noiseless entree into the room while Kittleman was busy at his desk.

"For ways that are dark and tricks that are vain, The Heathen Chinese is peculiar, I dare to maintain."

Surely truer words were never written as the actions of the guileless Chin Chin in this case fully proves.

Having made all needful preparations the Chinaman returned to the desk and squatted leisurely upon a corner of it, and as he did so he drew from his girdle a slender knife, only about as wide as one's finger, but nine inches long and as keen as a razor on both edge and point.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### HEATHEN CHINEE PERSUASION

SLOWLY the senses of the stricken man returned to him.

His eyes opened and he gazed around him like one bewildered.

For a few moments after recovering consciousness his mind wandered and he did not fully comprehend what had happened.

First his eyes rested on the grinning face of the Chinaman, who, seated on the edge of the desk, swung his legs leisurely to and fro and smiled blandly at the victim whom he had entrapped so neatly.

Then the eyes of the lawyer sunk to his wrists, so tightly grasped by the silken cord, and by this time, his mind began to work clearly again and he comprehended what had happened.

The expression upon his face changed to one of violent rage and no doubt if he had had the use of his tongue he would have expressed his opinion of the treatment he had received in language more forcible than polite.

The Celestial, keeping a close watch upon the face of the lawyer, readily guessed what was passing in the mind of the other, and the grin upon his features grew more expansive than ever.

"'Melican man savey? Chinaman makee heap big fool, betee two bitts, alle samee for high!" he remarked, complacently.

The face of the lawyer was a study, being convulsed with rage.

The big veins upon his temple stood out and every muscle worked convulsively, but both cords and gag were too well applied to yield, and for a moment it appeared as if he would struggle with rage.

"Clum, clum, takee easy, 'Melican man," observed the heathen, consolingly.

"Next time know better—catchee heap sense, no pull wool ovel eyes."

"Can't speakee, hey? Wlite, mebbe," and the Celestial with the words pushed a sheet of paper within the lawyer's reach and put a pencil into his hand.

Kittleman eagerly seized upon the opportunity to free his mind.

"You infernal scoundrel," he wrote. "What do you mean by this outrage?"

Chin Chin read what the lawyer had written, then he shut one eye and winked with the other at the amazed Kittleman in the most significant way.

"'Melican man heap big lawyel, heap talkee, pull wool ovel judge's eyes, makee julymans b'lieve black is white and white no colol'tall."

"Chinaman get 'um in tight place—you catchee on, hey?" he said.

By this time Kittleman had in a great measure recovered from his surprise and had come to the conclusion that there was little advantage to be gained by displaying the anger he felt, and so, with a disposition to put the best possible face upon the matter, he wrote:

"What do you want?"

"You know me got you, hey?" Chin Chin queried.

Kittleman nodded his head.

"Vely good!" the Chinaman exclaimed, in a tone indicative of great satisfaction. "You wlite me gottee bite—bully boy! Chinaman like go fishee; 'Melican man tellee Chin Chin 'bout how he catchee bite, hey?"

"I'll see you hanged first!" the lawyer inscribed upon the paper, in a fury.

The Chinaman made himself master of the sentence, and then a grave look appeared upon his face.

"Chin Chin no wantee go hang," he remarked, in a tone indicative of great disapprobation.

"'Melican man go hang, mebbe, Chinaman clum see him dance, alle samee chicken, head off."

Kittleman scowled angrily at the idea.

"Old man, gal's fadder, clum see 'Melican man 'bout gal; he say no catchee—tellee big lie; then wlite, gotee bite."

"Who wlite to, hey? 'Melican man tellee Chinaman—Chinaman go catchee gal—catchee t'ousand dolla', hey?"

Again the lawyer became so frantic with rage that he nearly suffocated, for he understood now the full extent of the trap into which he had fallen, and he fully realized that he was helpless in the power of this novel sort of an enemy.

And now, too, flashed across his brain the remembrance of the account of the fight with the ruffians on the Palisades wherein a Chinaman had played so conspicuous a part, and he jumped to the conclusion that this yellow heathen who had so adroitly made him a victim, was the identical one who had so cleverly hit upon the track of the abductors amid the wilderness on the west bank of the river.

And now again—a second time he had struck in upon the trail and hit it off with the skill and sagacity of a bloodhound.

It seemed really marvelous that a man of the despised Oriental race should be able to perform such wonderful feats.

But for all this the lawyer made up his mind that he would not aid the heathen in his search.

He despised the easy way in which the Chinaman had succeeded in capturing him, and was firm in the resolve not to afford the other a particle of information.

He reasoned that if he could succeed in holding out for a short time, assistance must surely come.

The instructions he had given to the office-boy were that he must not be disturbed for half an hour.

The chances were great that at the expiration of that time some one would come in who desired to see him personally, possibly some client would drop in before the half-hour expired and would be anxiously awaiting an interview.

If the door was found to be locked, and there was no answer to the demand for admission, suspicion would be instantly excited and violence would be used to force an entrance.

The Chinaman by his cunning devices had succeeded in getting him into a tight place, but if he was resolute in his determination not to afford the wily heathen any information, he might succeed in getting the best of the shrewd and daring Celestial after all.

So with a contemptuous look on his dark face he wrote:

"The water is too deep for you—you are over your head and had better swim out."

The Chinaman puzzled over the sentence for a moment as though he was not familiar with the current slang of the day, then he shook his head.

"Ovel head," he muttered, "swim out? Chin Chin no wantee swim—no likee wate!—too muchee cold."

"Chinaman likee swim in blood!"

And the expression upon his face as he uttered the closing word of the sentence was so demoniac that the lawyer, with all his experience of hard cases, fairly quailed.

And as the Celestial finished the sentence he drew from beneath his coarse blue jacket a long, glittering knife, whose point and edges seemed to be of razor-like sharpness.

"You foolee John Chinaman, hey?" continued the heathen. "How you likee knife foolee with you 'Melican man?"

And then without waiting for the lawyer's reply, the Chinese ripped open the closely buttoned vest which the lawyer wore, exposing the snowy shirt front—Kittleman was quite an exquisite in regard to his dress—and with a firm hand pressed the needle-like point of the knife against the flesh right over the heart.

The point of the steel cut into the yielding skin and a spot of blood appeared upon the snow-white linen.

Great drops of sweat came out on the lawyer's brow, and every muscle in his frame seemed to become rigid with horror.

If he had had the power he would have cried out at the top of his lungs, for a deadly fear had seized upon him.

Not until this moment did he fully realize how great was the peril of his situation.

Now for the first did he understand how completely helpless he was in the power of this mysterious intruder.

If the Chinaman chose to strike the knife home to his heart no earthly power could save him from instant death.

The gag would stifle his dying groans, and then the partition walls which separated the office from the outer apartment had been purposely built stoutly, so that even loud conversation in the private office should not reach the ears of any one who might chance to be in the outer apartment.

Kittleman flattered himself that he was a keen reader of faces, and had often won many wagers from his professional associates by betting upon how juries would decide in complicated cases.

And now that he looked in the face of the Chinaman he felt satisfied that he was in the hands of a man who would not hesitate to take his life if he refused to do his bidding.

With the knife-point cutting into his flesh there was no longer any time to hesitate.

He must betray the man whom he had consented to serve, or else be transported with the secret to another world.

Kittleman was not made of the stuff of which ancient Roman heroes were composed.

Stoutly as he battled for his clients he had not the slightest intention of dying for any one of them.

In his opinion a live donkey was worth a dozen dead lions.

With a trembling hand then he wrote upon the paper:

"Don't use violence—I yield and will tell you all I know."

The savage look on the face of the Chinaman disappeared, and again the good-natured grin took its place.



"Melican man no muchee big fool as he look," he remarked, complacently.

"Spit out quick—clum, Chinaman pretty muchee big heap hully."

#### CHAPTER XXV.

##### THE LAWYER YIELDS.

CHIN CHIN scanned the sheet of paper upon which the lawyer had been scribbling and replaced it with a fresh one.

"The explanation is a rather long one to put upon paper," wrote the lawyer.

"Can't you take this thing out of my mouth so I can tell it to you?"

This was the last trick of the desperate lawyer. He had made up his mind that if he could succeed in getting his captor to remove the gag he would try to break the bonds which bound him and bellow lustily for help.

Chin Chin was not to be made a fool of in this easy way though, and he grinned and showed his white teeth, not in a humorous way, but as the dog does as he snarls, when this request was written down.

"Melican man no smart 'nuff to make fool heap big of John Chinaman."

"Writing plenty good!"

And he accompanied this remark with a movement of the knife so significant that it sent the cold chills running up and down the lawyer's back.

He was in the toils and he saw that the only way out was to make a clean breast of it and reveal to his captor all he knew.

At first the idea occurred to him that he could fool the Chinaman with some cleverly concocted tale, and so secure release from his present embarrassing position.

But then there was the danger that the Chinaman was already in possession of some of the facts of the case, and if he was he would surely detect the imposition and from the taste he had already had of the Chinaman's quality, he felt sure his captor would not hesitate to kill him on the spot if he discovered the cheat.

So, under the circumstances, Kittleman determined to tell the truth, suppressing all he could of it of course, but yet not enough to bring down upon his head the vengeance of the Celestial in case he was already in possession of some of the facts appertaining to the case.

"I'll make it as brief as I can," the lawyer wrote.

"For a year or so I have had a mysterious client called the Captain; what his name is I do not know."

"I have never seen the man, all his communications to me being made by letter."

"He has employed me half a dozen times on behalf of men charged with serious offenses, and never on his own account, so I came to the conclusion that he was some prominent politician, or the wire-puller of some such individual, to whom these fellows who had fallen into difficulties were useful around election time."

"He always paid my fees promptly, and as he seemed to want to keep himself in the background I never attempted to find out anything about him."

"It wasn't any of my business anyway and he was too good a customer to run the risk of displeasing by the display of any uncalled for curiosity."

"Three days ago I received a letter from him stating that he was in possession of some important facts concerning this missing girl and had written to Mr. Carrickford on the subject."

"Furthermore, he said he would like to have me take charge of the negotiations in the matter, and stated that if the railroad king was prepared to pay a good price the girl would be restored."

"I wrote back that it was a delicate matter for a lawyer of any repute to handle, but I would do the best I could with the case, and suggested to him to write to Carrickford to call upon me, so I would have a chance to suggest to him that I would be glad to act as his agent in the matter."

"Acting for the father in endeavoring to secure the return of his child is altogether a different matter from becoming the tool of a gang of rascally abductors."

A cunning look came into the eyes of the wily lawyer as he penned these words, but the stolid countenance of the Chinaman never changed.

He was attentively reading every word as fast as the other wrote, taking care to remove the written sheets and supply fresh paper when it was needed.

"In reply the Captain wrote that the idea was an excellent one and for me to report the particulars of the interview if Carrickford called upon me."

"The letter I was writing when you interrupted me was to this Captain."

The lawyer stopped writing.

"Melican man no mole to write?" asked the Celestial.

"No, you've got all the particulars now, and know as much about the matter as I do," wrote the lawyer.

"Whele you send lettell, hey?"

Kittleman had had Chinese clients in his time and had become used to their peculiar manner of speaking, so he comprehended the meaning of the speech, although the heathen, with his peculiarity of leaving out all r's and substituting l's in their places made queer work with the English tongue.

The lawyer hesitated for a moment, but a single glance into the stern eyes of the other told him that he had better answer,

It was in the mind of Kittleman to lie, and he had half determined to do so, when he chanced to look into the face of the Chinaman, but that look convinced him that it would not be wise to give utterance to anything but the truth.

"His letters are sent to a saloon in South Fifth avenue, near Bleecker street," Kittleman wrote.

"Numbel?" demanded the Chinese.

"I don't know what the number is. No number was ever given. The address was simply T. Captain, care Boloni's saloon, South Fifth avenue, near Bleecker street."

"Alle light," observed the Celestial.

He was satisfied that the lawyer had told all he knew about the matter.

From what he knew about the chief of the outlaws, he did not consider it probable that he would intrust the secret of his identity to any one in the situation of Kittleman.

He would use him when circumstances so demanded, pay him well for his services, and that would be the end of the matter.

Clearly he had ascertained all the lawyer knew in regard to the affair.

"Alle light," the Chinese repeated. "'Melican man no foollee, Chin Chin catchee t'ousand dolla'."

And then, leaving the bound and helpless man, he went to the side door and unlocking it peeped out into the entry as if to see that the coast was clear.

Kittleman comprehended what he was after, and in his heart he cursed the intruder most soundly.

"You miserable rascal!" thought the lawyer, being deprived of the power of speech; "you infernal yellow scoundrell! so far you have had everything your own way, but unless you are much smarter than I take you to be, you have got yourself into a scrape which may cost you pretty dearly before you get out of it."

"In a few minutes now I will be at liberty, and inside of half an hour I will take care that the Captain knows all the particulars of the little game you are playing, and if he don't put up a job to make you wish you had never troubled your head about this matter, then he is not the man I take him to be."

And Kittleman felt a glow of satisfaction steal over him when he reflected that the mysterious unknown, who called himself the Captain, would be apt to revenge the attack upon him in a terrible manner.

By the time he had arrived at this pleasant conclusion the Chinaman returned to him again.

And then occurred something which filled Kittleman with both rage and amazement.

The intruder stooped, put his arms around the helpless man, and with a mighty effort, showing that he was gifted with wonderful strength—strength almost superhuman—lifted Kittleman from his chair and flung him across his shoulder.

And then, apparently very little incommoded by his burden—Kittleman was no living skeleton either, but a solid, substantial man weighing a good hundred and fifty pounds—he marched to the side door, opened it, made sure that the entry was deserted, and then, after carefully closing the door behind him, hurried with his victim up the stairs.

The upper part of the building over the lawyer's office was used for manufacturing purposes, a few small concerns being located in the house, but some of the rooms were always empty.

Among others was a small front room on the second floor.

With his skeleton key the Chinaman easily secured entrance.

There wasn't anything in the apartment but some old boxes and broken lumber.

Chin Chin deposited his captive in a near corner of the room so that no one could possibly get a look at him through the keyhole of the door, and propped him up on both sides with the boxes.

Then he turned to depart.

Kittleman was in despair; already his limbs felt as if they did not belong to him, owing to the tight cord which bound them, and now it really seemed as if the Chinaman was going to leave him there to die.

He could not give an alarm; he could not move to help himself, and if he was left locked in the room—a room not opened once a month—death seemed certain.

The look of agony upon his face attracted the attention of the Chinese, and he guessed what thoughts were passing in the mind of the other.

"Be no 'flaid," he said. "Chin Chin no leave Melican man to die."

"Chinaman go catchee Captain, then clum back, alle light."

And with this assurance the Celestial departed, locking the door securely behind him.

#### CHAPTER XXVI.

##### THE HOTEL FRANÇAIS.

BOLONI'S saloon on South Fifth avenue was one of those obscure resorts for foreigners which abound in the neighborhood of the upper end of that street.

It was a little, dirty-looking place, restaurant and saloon combined.

There was a small bar in the front of the saloon where liquid refreshments, consisting

chiefly of beer and cheap French and German wines, were dispensed, and the rest of the saloon was occupied with a half-a-dozen of the round tables usually to be found in such places with stoutly made chairs scattered around them.

The place was neither better nor worse than its fellows of the same character.

Its principal customers were foreigners, Frenchmen, Germans and Italians, and about all its trade came after nightfall, when the exiles—many of whom were men who had left their country for their country's good—came in after their day's work was done to drink beer and talk politics, for the customers of the house were Red Republicans almost to a man, communists who dreamed of the day when all the wealth of the world should be divided equally, and each man be as good as his neighbor, if not a little better.

This is a paradox, of course, and will hardly bear examination, but then few of these Utopian schemes will.

In the police reports the saloon was rated as a quiet, orderly place, although well known to be the headquarters of a rabid gang, whose voices were always for blood and massacre.

But if you had questioned the captain of the precinct in regard to the matter his reply would have been:

"More beer than blood—all talk—don't amount to a row of pins. A dozen determined policemen can clean out a hundred of these spouting snoozers."

"But it relieves their minds to blow about how they are going to wipe out the aristocrats one of these days when they get good and ready, and as it apparently does them good, and doesn't do any one else any harm, I don't see any reason why they shouldn't howl about blood and vengeance as much as they like."

And so, although the nightly guests talked ever about the terrible deeds they were going to do when they raised the blood-red flag of the Commune in New York, yet there was hardly a saloon in the district to which the police paid less attention, and there was good reason for this too, for since the place had been opened the police had never been called upon to quell a disturbance within it.

Monsieur Anton Boloni, the proprietor, was a fellow standing nearly six feet high, muscular in proportion, and with the aid of his "bung-starter"—as the club-like instrument is called by aid of which the faucets are driven into the beer kegs—he always managed to preserve order in his saloon.

And most certainly the boldest patriot who ever threw his arm wildly aloft and swore that he was ready to yield up his heart's blood for the good of the cause, never cared to brave the burly Franco-German—Boloni was from the province of Alsace—after having once felt the weight of the bung-starter and the power of the saloon-keeper's arm.

And so it was that though the "patriots," like all patriots of this class, occasionally fell to quarreling among themselves in the most ferocious manner, yet the proprietor of the saloon was never obliged to call for the assistance of the blue-coated guardians of the peace to keep order, therefore in the police-annals the place bore an excellent reputation.

It lacked a few minutes to eleven o'clock, and the Franco-German was seated behind his bar, smoking a well-worn pipe and reading a morning newspaper.

From ten to twelve were the dulllest hours in the day for the saloon.

At twelve the patrons of the place who worked in the neighborhood began to drop in for a lunch, and from that time until twelve o'clock at night the saloon was seldom without customers.

At the time we introduce the reader to the "Hotel Français," which was the high-sounding title of Monsieur Boloni's establishment, there was not a single customer in the place.

The proprietor sat behind his bar, busy with his pipe and newspaper, as we have said.

The fat French man-cook who presided over the culinary department in the rear of the saloon and the solitary waiter who attended to the guests were both dozing in their chairs in the kitchen.

Just as the hands of the clock touched eleven the door of the saloon opened and a man entered.

The host rose to wait upon his guest as he approached the bar.

The new-comer was a man about the medium size, plainly dressed in a dark business-suit rather the worse for wear.

He was evidently a foreigner—a Frenchman, apparently, for he had high cheek-bones, dark eyes, and jet-black hair, cut rather short and curling in little crispy ringlets all over his bullet-shaped head.

A jet-black mustache adorned his upper lip, and a short pointed chin-beard concealed the lower part of his face.

He would have been a rather good-looking fellow despite the darkness of his complexion which told that he had been for some time exposed to the rays of a tropical sun, if it had not been for his nose which was broad and flat.

A savant who made a close study of the human race would have been apt to decide from



the appearance of this member of the stranger's face that he had negro blood in his veins.

"Do I behold Anton Boloni?" asked the man, in a confidential sort of way, approaching the counter and leaning his elbow upon it.

The landlord gazed steadfastly at the questioner for a few moments as though he was racking his memory over to see if he had ever met the stranger before.

The saloon-keeper prided himself upon his excellent memory, and it was his boast that he never forgot a face.

But in this case he was at fault.

If he had ever met the man, he did not remember him.

"Yes; that is my name," he answered.

"Glad am I to see you!" exclaimed the other, in the most cordial manner.

"My name is Victor Durange."

"Victor Durange," repeated the host, slowly, and then he shook his head. "I do not remember the name."

"It is not strange; I am not known to you," responded the other, with a true Gallic grimace.

He spoke English quite fluently, but with an accent that clearly denoted it was not his mother tongue.

"But, *mon ami*, dost thou remember one François Lesard, sometimes called the Iron Man, because by trade he was a blacksmith and could fell an ox at a single blow?"

"Oh, yes," responded Boloni quickly, his dull face lighting up.

"He was a school-fellow of mine; we were both brought up in the same village together, and when the time came for us to set out in the world to seek our fortunes in company we journeyed to Paris."

"And there joined the ranks of the Commune," continued the other, when the host paused for a moment to take breath, "and stood shoulder to shoulder together in those glorious days when the blood of the aristocrats ran red in the gutters and the people ruled in Paris."

"Aha! thou knowest this?" questioned Boloni, wondering at the knowledge of the other.

"Ay; for in Marseilles I, too, followed the red flag of freedom, and when the day of defeat came, like Iron François, I was caught in the toils and sent to New Caledonia, and there Lesard and I were comrades."

"I see, I see."

"You were lucky enough to escape to this country."

"Thou art right, thanks to friends who aided me."

"Lesard and myself were in that terrible place for two years," the stranger continued, "and the climate told terribly upon our Iron Man, for he was not used to the heat, while it affected me but little, for I am a child of the sun, being a native of the Island of Guadalupe."

"You have probably guessed from my swarthy face that I was not born or reared in France."

The other nodded.

"Lesard and myself managed at last to make our escape from that terrible prison-hole, and finally reached Paris, both he and I being of the opinion that we could find concealment there better than elsewhere."

"You are right!" exclaimed the host. "A great city is like a jungle. The hunted man who knows the paths and the secret hiding-places can baffle an army of spies and pursuers."

"Lesard and I became chums," the stranger continued. "Times were hard, and we had to keep constantly on the lookout for the police, and we had a toilsome time to gain our bread."

"At times, my friend, to tell you the honest truth, at times we were near starving."

"Before I would perish from hunger I would have killed some aristocrat and taken his gold," declared the host, furiously.

The other looked around him cautiously and then leaning over the counter whispered:

"We did do that; rather than starve we struck our oppressors, but at last the police got on our track, we resisted, shot down the gendarmes like dogs, but in the fight Lesard was mortally wounded."

"I managed to get him to our hole, but in a few hours he died."

"And just before his soul took flight, he pressed my hand and counseled me to fly to America."

"In the New York somewhere you will find Anton Boloni," he said. "He has prospered I hear; seek him out, tell him I sent you and he will advise you."

"Say to him that with my latest breath I spit upon the aristocrats and cried, 'Vive la Commune!'"

There was a dead silence for a few minutes.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE SPY.

BOLONI caressed his fat chin with his hand for a moment and then heaved a sigh.

"Poor François, he was a giant of a man," he remarked.

"The news that he was dead reached me but not the manner of his taking-off."

"Is it as I have told you?"

"And he directed you to come to me when you should reach these shores?"

"He did."

"And what do you require, *mon ami*—money?" and the saloon-keeper cast a covert glance at the well-worn suit of the stranger.

"Oh, no," replied the other, quickly drawing himself up.

"Money I do not require; I am not dressed a prince, I know, but I have plenty of cash to keep me until I am able to turn around."

"My idea in coming to you is to get advice."

"You have been some time in this country; you know the manners and customs and can tell me what I had best do."

"Yes, yes, I am a good American myself now," Boloni said with a laugh.

"Have you a trade, *mon ami*?"

A look of supreme contempt appeared upon the face of the other.

"Oh, yes, a fine trade for a gentleman and one who has led the men of the red flag and chased like a parcel of rats the flying aristocrats."

"My fool of a father—a man who had not two ideas of getting a decent living, sent me when a lad to be a baker."

And the manner in which the speaker hissed out the word was really laughable.

"It is a poor trade for a man like yourself," observed the saloon-keeper.

"Bah! I would not follow it even to save myself from starving!" the other exclaimed indignantly.

"Look you, Master Anton, I will confess to you that I am not a scrupulous man, and I care not what I do for money provided the risk is not too great and I have an opportunity to strike at some of the rich rats who are living in ease and luxury on the money they have stolen from the sons of toil."

"I would cover up my offense—if offense it be—by giving one-half my gains to the cause of liberty."

Boloni shook his head approvingly.

"To my thinking it is no crime to rob robbers," he remarked.

"My opinion exactly, and the Iron Man and myself lived up to it across the water until the unlucky night when we chanced to run foul of the gendarmes."

"Now if you happen to know of anybody who needs a good, discreet man, one who is not particular what he does, so long as the service is well paid and who can be trusted to keep as silent as the grave—"

"When did you arrive in this country?" asked the saloon-keeper, abruptly.

"A week ago. I went from France to England and then sailed for Montreal, for I had been told that it was half French and I would not find any difficulty in getting into something good, but it is a village, not a great city, and I could not content myself there, besides I saw at the first glance that there was no chance for a man like myself there."

"In New York I arrived this morning, and came straight to you."

The thick brows of the innkeeper knit together as he reflected upon the matter.

There was not in his mind the least doubt in regard to the man's story.

The tidings of the death of his ancient chum, François, the Iron Man, had come to him, and the particulars exactly coincided with what the stranger had related.

That the Iron Man did not hesitate to stoop to crime when the circumstances of the case seem to warrant a departure from the path of virtue, was well known to the saloon-keeper.

In fact he had been a partner in a few little "affairs" with the Iron Man which if the police had been lucky enough to catch them would have sent both to the galleys for quite a term of years.

And now, as Boloni reflected upon the matter, it seemed to him as if this stranger had appeared just in the nick of time to fill a certain place, for which he had been desired to select a man.

He was a stranger in the country, knew no one, and the history of the past, as far as it relates to the city of New York, was a blank.

"Aha, my brave!" the saloon-keeper exclaimed, after quite a long pause, "I think I will be able to do something for you."

"Corbleu!" cried the stranger, rubbing his hands together in glee, "I was right then to come to you, and the Iron Man did me a good turn when to me he spoke your name and advised me to ask your help when I should land in the New York."

"Wait, *mon ami*, until I explain myself," continued the saloon-keeper.

"There is a good friend of mine, a medical man, who has a private retreat for his patients in the neighborhood of the city."

"A *maison de sainte*?"

"Exactly; an asylum it is called in this country."

"I understand."

"It is a strictly private retreat, not a public institution, you see, and only patients are received whose friends are able to pay well for their board."

The other winked mysteriously, and then lean-

ing still further over the counter so as to come nearer to the ear of the innkeeper, said:

"Sometimes I presume mistakes are made and people who are not really mad are sent to enjoy your friend's hospitality."

"Oh, yes, such mistakes will happen once in a while, you know."

"The best of doctors are apt to fall into error, and in some cases it is almost impossible even for an expert in such matters to tell whether the patient is really mad or not."

"And in such a case your esteemed friend of course does not attempt to dispute the opinion of the eminent men whose judgment consigns the patient to his care."

"Certainly not; that is not his affair," replied the saloon-keeper, with a significant wink.

"It is his business to look after the patients and take good care of them; the question of their sanity does not concern him; that is for the doctors to decide."

"I presume that sometimes, though, the patients who fancy that they are unjustly confined become insolent."

"Oh, yes, I suppose so," the other replied, in an indifferent way.

"But in all such cases the cold-water treatment or the strait-jacket soon convinces them that it is best not to rebel."

"Severe measures of course must be adopted sometimes; take the case of a strong man, for instance, a man who thinks he is unjustly detained and is determined to get out," observed the stranger.

"Such a man would be difficult to handle and actual violence would have to be used."

"Certainly, of course," remarked the innkeeper.

"You cannot reason with a madman, you know," he continued, phlegmatically.

"In such a case the easiest way is to knock the man down with a club and so beat some sense into his head."

"I see, I see!" exclaimed the son of Guadalupe, rubbing his hands gleefully together, as if he enjoyed the prospect.

"It would not do, though, to allow the world at large to understand how these refractory madmen are tamed and held under control."

"Oh, no," replied the saloon-keeper.

"The world is censorious; people who are in possession of their reason do not understand how difficult it is to deal with the unfortunates whose brains are disordered."

"They do not understand that you must meet force with force."

"Precisely; I see you understand the matter," observed the Franco-German, with an approving nod.

"And therefore it is necessary that your friend, the doctor, should have discreet men around him—men who will not stick at a trifle, and who can be depended upon to hold their tongues, no matter what may occur."

"Exactly, you are correct."

"Of course when a man is struggling with a maniac he cannot always be sure of what he is doing," the stranger remarked.

"A blow may be stricken harder than is intended, and death might be the consequence."

"Yes, yes, such accidents have happened; they are to be deplored, of course, but no one is to blame; the attendant is obliged to run such risks sometimes, therefore discreet men are required, who will not flag if such an affair happens, and then, too, they must be powerful fellows, and willing to take risks and abide the consequences."

"What I have learned in the past should be a guarantee that I am willing to take great responsibilities in the future," exclaimed Durange, proudly.

"And as for my strength—well, I cannot boast as did our friend, the Iron Man, that I can fell an ox with a single blow, but I can hold my own with any man I ever encountered—ordinary men I mean, not giants of strength like the Iron Man."

"You will answer, my brave."

"And the pay, *mon ami*?"

"A hundred dollars a month, that is about five hundred francs, you know."

"Aha!" cried the other, smacking his lips in glee, it is a fortune!"

"My friend the doctor will be here in half an hour; wait, and we will settle the matter."

As he concluded the sentence the host happened to glance over the narrow curtain which, placed across the lower part of the window, shielded the interior from the gaze of the street.

His eyes fell upon a Chinaman, who, seated upon a doorstep across the street, seemed to be watching the saloon.

The face of the saloon-keeper darkened, and an involuntary exclamation escaped from his lips.

"Aha, a spy," he muttered.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### A GREAT SCHEME.

THE son of Guadalupe, whose wits had been rendered extremely keen by the life of adventure which he had led, was quick to notice the impression produced upon the other by the sight of the Chinaman seated upon the doorsteps upon



the opposite side of the street, and his eyes following in the direction of the other's glances, soon caught sight of the Chinese, and as there wasn't any one else in sight who seemed likely to excite any suspicion, he immediately jumped to the conclusion that it was to the Celestial that the exclamation referred.

"Aha, *mon ami*, you have noticed the animal, eh?"

"What? have you seen him before?" asked the saloon-keeper.

"Oh, yes, he was wandering along the street as I came up it, and when he saw me cross the street with the evident intention of coming in here—I was ignorant of your exact location, and came up on the other side of the street—he intercepted me."

"He did, eh?" exclaimed the Franco-German, betraying a great deal of interest in the matter.

"Yes, he spoke in the queer way that these Chinamen affect, but I managed to make out his meaning."

"And what said he?"

"That he was a washee-washee, a laundryman, you know, and he wished to find where a captain lived."

"A captain!" ejaculated the saloon-keeper, with a long, hard breath.

"Yes, he had forgotten his name, but he was a captain and lived somewhere in this neighborhood."

"It is droll, is it not?" and Durange laughed.

"It is one of your customers, my brave, who owes this animal a bill and he waits in ambush to collect it."

"No, no, there is no captain comes here that I know of," replied the saloon-keeper, betraying that he was slightly nervous by his manner.

"But you will understand, my friend, that there may be some among my customers who will not like to be spied upon, and the sight of this miserable, squatting like a huge toad upon yonder step will not be agreeable to them."

"Say but the word and I will go and pull his ears until he is glad to go away."

"No, no, *mon ami*!" exclaimed Boloni, laying his hand restrainingly upon the arm of the other, who had made a movement as though he intended to execute his threat upon the instant.

"Peste! violence would never do! If you pulled his ears or molested him in any way, the miserable would cry out, the police would come, and then there would be a pretty kettle of fish."

"True, true, I did not think of that."

"I will wager gold to copper that I know the party for whom he lies in wait, and thanks to one of those ingenious inventions of which the Americans are so proud, I can block his game."

"Aha! is that so?"

"It is, as you shall see," and as he spoke Boloni took up a mouthpiece connected with a flexible tube which was attached to the wall at the back of the bar.

"Hello, hello!" he exclaimed through the tube.

"It is called the telephone," he explained to the other, as he waited for a reply.

"I have just called the central office to which all wires run; then, when they answer me, I tell them to give me number so-and-so, and they switch my wire onto the wire running to that person's place; then I can talk with him as freely as though he was seated here by my side."

"*Morbleu!*" cried the other, who evidently was not well acquainted with this new adjunct to civilization, "it is wonderful!"

"It is like magic, is it not, *mon ami*?"

Then:

"Hello, hello!" came from the instrument.

"Give me B, one thousand and one!" directed the saloon-keeper through the telephone.

"Now you will soon hear the voice of the person with whom I wish to converse," remarked Boloni.

"Upon my word if this thing had come to light in the dark ages they would have hanged the inventor for a sorcerer!" exclaimed the other.

"Undoubtedly, but he is now hailed as a benefactor."

"Hello, hello!" came through the telephone, but the voice was entirely different from the one that had at first spoken.

"It is the party with whom I wish to speak; I recognize his tones," the saloon-keeper remarked.

"Oh, yes, I can perceive the difference," Durange replied, evidently deeply interested in the matter.

"Who is it?" asked the voice through the instrument.

"It is I, number two," Boloni answered.

"Upon my word you are near the head," observed the other with all a Frenchman's fondness for cracking a joke.

"Anton Boloni is never found among the rabble!" the saloon-keeper exclaimed proudly.

"What want you?" asked the voice through the telephone.

"A Chinaman sits on the doorstep across the way who seems to be watching the house," was replied.

"A thick-set, muscular-looking scoundrel with a remarkable flat nose?" asked the voice.

Boloni took a look across the street at the Celestial who was still squatting upon the doorstep, regardless of the jeers of the boys who

passed by, each one of whom felt called upon to hurl some jest at the almond-eyed son of the East.

"The description is exact, is it not?" the saloon-keeper remarked to the other.

"Exact!" Durange exclaimed. "It is as if he had sat for his portrait!"

"Yes, your description fits him to perfection," the saloon-keeper said through the voice.

"The fellow means mischief, but thanks to your timely warning he will not be able to do any. Keep your eyes on him and see what he is up to."

"Perhaps it would be as well to have him followed and see whither he goes when he becomes tired of watching and departs."

"I will," answered Boloni.

"Adieu," said the voice.

"Adieu," replied the saloon-keeper.

"It is wonderful!" ejaculated Durange, referring to the telephone.

"Oh, yes, it comes in very useful at times," the Franco-German answered.

"Now in this case had it not been for this instrument I should not have been able to warn this party that there was danger in his coming to this locality."

"The Chinaman will be nicely fooled," Durange observed.

"Yes, the yellow idiot! He can wait here now until he is gray and he will not see the man he is after."

"The captain, eh?"

"Yes the one he calls the captain, for there is one who comes here that is known by that name; but I fancy I know who he is after for this party whom I have just named has a military bearing and looks like a man who has borne arms."

And as the saloon-keeper spoke he cast a covert glance at the other as if to see what impression the speech had made.

But Durange was merely chuckling over the anticipated discomfiture of the Chinese, and had not paid any particular attention to the words of the saloon-keeper.

"How disgusted the yellow rascal will be when he finds that he will have nothing but his labor for his pains," said Durange, in high glee.

"And that is all he will have if he waits there from now until doomsday," observed Boloni, grimly.

"Aha, it is a satisfaction to both these miserable spies!" Durange exclaimed.

"Yes, and I say, would it not be a good idea to turn the tables on this fellow?"

"How?"

"He comes here to play the spy upon one of my customers; now suppose you play the spy upon him."

"The idea is grand, *mon brave*!" cried the other, catching eagerly at the idea.

"Upon my word it would be a rare joke, and I would undertake the task in an instant were it not for the fact that I must wait here to meet your doctor friend."

"Ah, yes, yes—let me see what day is this?" exclaimed the saloon-keeper, pretending to reflect.

"It is Wednesday."

"How unlucky!" cried Boloni in a tone of deep regret. He never comes on Wednesday; it is his day to attend to business at his retreat, but he will be here to-morrow."

"You will wait—what matters it? My house is your home while you remain in the New York."

"Can I do less for the man who brought to me the dying words of the Iron Man, the brave soul who yielded up his life fighting the oppressors of mankind?"

Durange silently pressed the hand of the host.

"You shall follow this spy and track him to his lair, and as you are a stranger in the city, my little cousin, who is a bright lad and knows the streets like one to the town born, shall go with you."

Boloni touched a call-bell which stood upon the shelf behind the bar and a bright-looking but rather undersized boy, some fifteen or sixteen years old, made his appearance.

"This is my nephew, Henri Grillon."

"Henri, this is Monsieur Durange, who is tried and true. You and he will undertake a task together."

"See you that Chinaman yonder? You are to track him to his lair when he goes home."

"Sit down and enjoy a glass of beer while you wait."

The two seated themselves and the beer was brought.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### A SPY UPON A SPY.

AFTER serving the beer, which he brought with his own hands, Boloni returned to the bar, first informing the pair that he would warn them the moment the Chinaman made a move to depart.

The man and the boy, as they drank their beer, taking their time in disposing of the fluid after the German fashion, quietly surveyed each other.

The boy was a slight fellow, whose figure seemed altogether too slender and too young for his face which wore an old and foxy expression.

He had the same dark hair and eyes as the saloon-keeper, and there was a great family resemblance between the two.

In fine the youth could be described as one of those youngsters who wore an old head on young shoulders.

The two soon got into conversation, the youth doing his best to draw the other out, and the new-comer apparently never suspecting that he was undergoing the operation known as "pumping," talked away with all the fluency popularly supposed to be a part and parcel of the Gallic race.

Customers commenced to drop in, and the business of the place began to be brisk.

Minutes lengthened into hours, yet still the Chinaman opposite stirred not but sat as patiently on the doorstep as though he was a graven image instead of a living, breathing man.

The beer-mugs of the waiting pair had been twice refilled.

"Look you, *mon ami*," said Durange, to the saloon-keeper when he brought the third round of beer, accompanied by sandwiches, to the table where the two sat, "do you think the animal intends to remain on the doorstep forever?"

"Who knows?" responded the host, with the genuine Gallic shrug of the shoulders, "maybe he has taken root there like the sapling which is thrust carelessly into the earth."

"Anyway, my brave, you are much more comfortable here than he can possibly be there so let him linger as long as he likes and be hanged to him."

Just at that moment a messenger-boy entered the room.

In his hand he held a letter and as he glanced around for the proprietor, perceiving the Franco-German with the empty beer-mugs in his hand, came straight up to him.

"This is Boloni's saloon?" he said.

"It is," and the saloon-keeper held out his hand for the letter.

"Hold on," said the boy, who was a dull, stupid sort of fellow.

"This here letter ain't for you, it's for Ca—"

But before he could finish the word the saloon-keeper rudely interrupted him and snatched the letter out of his hand.

"Hold your tongue, dolt, idiot that you are!" cried Boloni in a low, suppressed tone, but full of menace.

"Do you see, imp of Satan that you are! that the letter is addressed to my care?"

"I am Anton Boloni, the master of this place; canst thou not read, blundering blockhead?"

The boy scratched his head slowly, bewildered by this unexpected attack.

"I was told to be careful not to make any mistake," he stammered. "Lawyer—"

"Hold your tongue and get out, you dolt!" cried the saloon-keeper, fiercely, but still keeping his voice down so as not to excite any attention.

"A fine messenger you are to be crying out your business so that all may hear thee."

"I didn't mean for to say anything," whimpered the boy, retreating to the door.

The saloon-keeper followed him up.

"It is your business to keep a still tongue in your head," Boloni cried.

"Your masters would speedily strip that uniform from your back if it came to their ears that you babbled of your business."

"Oh, I never say a word!" and the boy, frightened and disgusted, made his escape through the door.

The moment the messenger appeared on the street the Chinaman, on the opposite side of the way, suddenly showed signs of life.

He rose to his feet, noted the direction in which the boy turned after emerging from the beer-shop and then shambled down the street, the direction that the lad took, evidently with the intention of intercepting him at the corner.

The saloon-keeper was on the watch for just such a movement and was quick to guess the Chinaman's game.

"Aha! he is after the boy!" he muttered.

Then he quickly tore the letter open.

It was a brief epistle, but as he glanced over it, seemingly devouring its contents, a dark scowl came over his face.

Twisting the letter and envelope up together he thrust it into the tiny flame of the cigar-lighter that stood on the end of the counter and allowed it to burn to ashes, all the while keeping his eyes fixed upon the Chinaman lumbering down the street in the clumsy fashion common to his race.

"Forewarned is forearmed," muttered the saloon-keeper, and then with a motion of his head he called the lad to him.

"That Chinaman yonder means to speak to the messenger-boy who has just departed," said Boloni.

"Follow them—be careful that you are not observed, and when he gets through with the boy you overhaul the messenger and find out what game the Chinaman is playing."

"Be careful that the yellow scoundrel does not detect that you are keeping watch of him."

"Oh, *mon ami*, trust me for that!" exclaimed the lad, confidently, in his shrill, falsetto voice.

Then, taking care to ascertain that the attention of the Chinaman was directed to the boy



so that his departure from the saloon would not be observed by the man upon whom he was to play the spy, the lad glided through the door to the street, crossed immediately to the other side of the way, and then sauntered slowly along in the wake of the Chinese.

Of course, after the boy spy had got out of the saloon and across the street, it was impossible, even if the Celestial had chanced to look behind and notice him, for the yellow son of the East to guess that a watcher was upon his track.

But the idea that he in his turn might be watched never seemed to enter the head of the Chinaman, for he did not take the trouble to look behind him but kept his eyes fixed on the messenger-boy.

At the corner the lad crossed over to proceed up the side street to Broadway and there the Chinaman encountered him.

A few words were exchanged between the two, and then the Chinaman disappeared around the corner in company with the boy.

The spy quickened his pace, and when he arrived at the corner crossed over to the opposite side of the street to the one that the two whom he was watching so closely were on.

The pair proceeded slowly along, busy in conversation, and as far as the French lad could make out the Chinaman was urging the messenger-boy to do something which the other was not inclined to perform, for he shook his head repeatedly.

Then the Celestial's hand went fumbling in among his clothes and he gave something to the boy, and from the gleam of satisfaction which overspread the face of the lad the French boy came to the conclusion that it was a piece of money.

After the coin was in the possession of the messenger-boy, the Chinaman bent his head with an eager look evidently to receive some communication which the other whispered in his ear, and when this was done it was the Celestial's turn to shake his head.

Evidently he was not satisfied with what he heard.

But from the actions of the boy it was evident he was vigorously protesting that it was all right, and in a few moments the Chinaman nodded as much as to imply that he was satisfied, turned upon his heel and began to retrace his steps.

It seemed likely that he was going back to his old post on the doorstep opposite Boloni's saloon.

The messenger-boy halted for a moment and gazed after the departing Celestial with a broad grin on his dull face, and then putting his fingers to his nose made the peculiar gesture so common to the street-gamins of New York, which in sign language signifies a contemptuous "No, you don't!" or, "Don't you wish you may get it?"

Having thus relieved his mind, the messenger-boy went on his way.

The French spy was quick to guess what had transpired.

"Dull and stupid as the dolt of a boy is, he has succeeded in tricking the Chinaman!" the lad exclaimed.

Then, the moment the Chinese disappeared around the corner, the spy crossed the street directly to the boy.

The messenger-lad saw him coming, recognized him as having been in the saloon when he had delivered the letter, and the grin upon his face broadened.

"Did you see that yaller coon go for me?" he asked. "And didn't I play him for a flat? Oh, no, not much!"

The other saw that the boy was inclined to be communicative and that there wasn't any need of urging him to a recital.

"You fooled him, then?"

"You bet I did! An' I struck him for a dollar, too, an' got it. He wanted to know what I went into the saloon for, and when I told him a letter, he wanted to know who it was for, an' I told him it would cost him a dollar to come in, an' he shelled out the ducat, an' then I told him the letter was for—Mister Boloni—haw haw!"

"A good joke!" cried the spy, with assumed merriment. "I will tell Boloni of it, ha! ha!"

And then each went on his way.

### CHAPTER XXX.

#### A STEADY WATCH.

"THAT animal means mischief," said the saloon-keeper, with a dark look upon his face, as he approached the table where Durange sat and helped himself to the glass of beer which he had brought for the boy.

"The letter I received notified me that a Chinaman was on the watch to do me or some of my customers a mischief.

"The miserable!"

And the saloon-keeper shook his clinched fist in the direction of the street.

"I suspected that he meant mischief though, even before I received the note of warning.

"You remember I told you I thought he was playing the spy upon this place the moment I set eyes upon him.

"The yellow scoundrel! his wit is not equal to his courage, for I tell you, *mon brave*, it takes a man with a backbone to cross my path.

"If he had been wise, he would have kept in the background so that his mission would not have been suspected."

"He was a great stupid to have so openly shown his hand," Durange remarked.

"Yes, for it gave me a chance, thanks to this wonderful American invention," and the speaker glanced toward the telephone, "to beat his game before he had fairly begun it.

"He waits there, mind you, to see a certain party.

"If he waits until doomsday that party will not come."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Durange; "it is droll, is it not?"

"How easily you will beat him at the very game of his own selection.

"And to think that this yellow brute of a Chinaman should attempt to pit his dull wits against the brains of a man like yourself, who has graduated from *la belle Paris*, the great city of the world."

And the two laughed heartily in contempt at the idea.

A few more jokes at the expense of the Celestial followed, and then their attention was attracted by the figure of the spy slowly returning.

He resumed his former position and became a statue again.

"My bright Henri will soon be here, and then we will know what the Chinaman wanted with the boy.

"That Henri is a bright lad and as sharp as a steel-trap.

"He is but a boy, but upon his shoulders he carries the head of a man of sixty."

"Yes, yes, he looks like a sharp lad, one who is wise beyond his years," Durange responded.

"But see, *mon ami*!" exclaimed the son of Guadalupe, suddenly, as an idea occurred to him; "is it wise to have Henri come openly into the saloon while that yellow scoundrel is on the watch outside?"

"Will he not be apt to suspect from the lad's tender years that he is not a customer, but one connected with the place, and so destroy the lad's usefulness in case you wanted to ever again use him for a spy upon this dusky rascal?"

This expression of contempt applied to the Chinaman was like the pot calling the kettle black, for the skin of the speaker was fully as dark as the complexion of the Chinese.

A cunning expression came over the face of the saloon-keeper, and he nodded his head sagely.

"Aha! trust me to take all possible precautions," he replied.

"Henri will not return by the front door, but come in by the back way.

"There is a rear entrance which we use on Sunday, when the miserable excise law and the police forbid us to sell liquor.

"The yard of one of the houses on the side street joins mine. There is a narrow passageway with a gate by the side of this house, and my customers come in through the gate, pass through the yard and enter my premises by means of a gate in the side wall of my yard.

"Henri will return this way and so avoid the observation of this miserable yonder."

"You have a great head!" Durange remarked, admiringly.

Just as the observation fell from his lips the French boy entered the room.

Seating himself at the table, he related with great glee how neatly the messenger-boy, in spite of all his stupidity, had succeeded in fooling the Chinaman.

The three chuckled greatly over the matter, and the host was careless enough to remark:

"Peste! this Chinaman is not the cunning rascal that the newspapers make him out to be, or he never would have played this game in so clumsy a manner."

"Aha!" exclaimed Durange, with great interest. "This yellow imbecile is not a stranger to you then—you have heard of him before?"

The saloon-keeper appeared to be a trifle confused, while the thin lips of the boy were compressed tightly together, and a warning look shot out of his sharp, black eyes.

"To that question, yes and no," responded Boloni, with an effort recovering himself.

"I have heard of him, but that is all. But this may not be the same man, for this appears to be a real Chinaman, while the man of whom I speak is one of the police spies, detectives as they are called here, whose favorite disguise is that of a Chinaman."

"Oh, I feel certain that this miserable is a real Chinese," Durange asserted.

"He's not the man then I mean."

"What do you think is best to be done now?" asked the boy, and it was plain to Durange from the way in which he put the question and the manner that the saloon-keeper received it, that the speaker was regarded as an equal, if not a superior, by the host.

"Wait! that is all," Boloni answered.

"The yellow miserable cannot do any hurt or gain any information if he perches on the doorstep there until he grows into the stone.

"I have taken proper precautions, and it is as

good to have him waste his time here, for then he cannot have his eyes elsewhere."

"A grand idea!" ejaculated Durange.

The boy did not speak, only nodded.

"In time, of course, he will tire, and then when he goes away I propose that you two play the spy upon him."

"Aha! another immense idea!" exclaimed the son of Guadalupe, upon whom the beer seemed to be taking effect.

The lip of the boy curled slightly, and a look which savored of contempt appeared in his shrewd, piercing eyes.

"Had I not better go alone?"

"No, for if the Chinaman should chance to discover that he was being spied upon he might lead you into a trap, and then monsieur here, who is as muscular as a giant, would get you out."

"True, true, believe me, *mon ami*, although I cannot fell an ox with a single blow like the Iron Man, yet I am strong enough to play with common fellows as the conjurer plays with his puppets."

Again the boy's lip curled and the disdainful look appeared in his eyes.

It was plain he held in contempt the boast of the other.

And so it was settled that they should wait until the Chinaman departed, and then play the spy upon him.

But this performance did not take place for the reason that the chief performer would not act the character assigned to him.

The Chinaman did not go away.

Statue-like he remained, and, as the saloon-keeper had suggested, it seemed as if he had grown into the stone.

Minutes lengthened into hours, and then the hours with leaden-gaited feet began to chase each other away, but still the Chinaman kept his post.

The shades of night descended, and the glare of the gas-lights flared through the darkness of the night.

The Chinaman never stirred.

The day approached its late hours, the lights began to disappear, and the people in the street grew few and far between.

At midnight the Chinaman still squatted like a huge toad upon the doorstep.

A few minutes past twelve the last customer of the saloon departed.

Boloni closed up the place and put out the gas, and with Durange and the boy retired to his apartments, which were on the second floor, directly over the saloon.

Peeping through the window, concealed by the curtains, and being careful to have the gas turned down low, so that no sign of light could be seen from the street to betray that the apartment was occupied, Boloni and the boy watched the Chinaman until the hands of the clock upon the mantle-piece showed that the morning was three hours old.

Durange had lain down upon the sofa, saying that he would relieve the watchers when either one of them grew tired, immediately upon entering the room, and in five minutes had sunk into a profound sleep.

In fact, as the boy had observed:

"The pig! he has filled himself full of beer!"

And it was the truth.

But as Boloni observed:

"We do not need a man of brains, but a brute to use as a tool, and he will answer."

At three o'clock the two gave up the watch.

In the morning the Chinaman was gone.

But in the house opposite rooms were rented, and the sharp-eyed Henri noticed that there was a curtain covering the window of the little hall room on the second story which had never been there before.

The boy made it his business to spy into the matter.

As both the saloon-keeper and Henri had surmised, a Chinaman had rented the room early on the previous morning.

It did not require the skill of a prophet to guess that behind the curtain sat the Chinaman still on the watch, dogged as the bloodhound on the crimson scent.

### CHAPTER XXXI.

#### ARRIVING AT A CONCLUSION.

As the reader will probably remember the railroad king and the chief of the great private detective system left the office of the criminal lawyer considerably disgusted at the complete failure of their attempt to obtain information from him.

They discussed the matter in all its bearings as they rode back in the cab to Mr. Carrickford's office.

"To get right at the kernel of the thing," General Binkerton remarked in conclusion, "whoever is playing this game is a master-hand.

"It is no common, petty scoundrel, but a genius in his way.

"I thought perhaps we might get a chance to trip the lawyer up. If he had acknowledged that he was acting for the abductor of your child we might have had a fly at him.

"But you see that was thought of and provided for in advance.

"He is ignorant of any knowledge of the mat-



ter, but he will be glad to act as *your* agent and do his best to recover the lost daughter, if he can possibly open communication with the abductors."

"Yes, I see," Carrickford remarked.

"It seems to all have been planned with fiend-like skill, and what makes it still more bitter, is the fact that I am confident that it is the work of that wretched criminal, Harry Carrickford, who has risen like a specter from the grave to fulfill the oath of vengeance which he swore so many years ago."

"It is not improbable; it is the work of no common man, that is clear."

"Under the circumstances, what course do you advise me to take, general?"

"Well," said the great detective, after quite a pause, "it goes against my grain to advise you to yield to the demands of this scoundrel, but if I do not succeed in getting any clew to the matter within a week, then I should say you had better pay the hundred thousand dollars, and so save your daughter's life."

"Do you believe the scoundrels would really dare to kill her?" exclaimed the disconsolate father, with a groan.

"I'm afraid that this gang who have abducted your daughter are desperate enough to do almost anything," the detective replied.

"There isn't any use of mincing the matter," the general continued.

"It is my duty to give you my opinion as frankly as possible. This abduction seems to be planned and carried out with such skill that it is almost impossible to get a clew to the scoundrels so that the police can get their hands upon them."

"I would be the last man in the world to advise any yielding if I thought there was the least chance to capture the rascals and rescue your daughter, but I don't see any at present."

"You want your child—a hundred thousand dollars will restore her to you. The sum is an enormous one, of course, but you are able to pay it without being troubled."

"Oh, yes; it is a flea-bite to such a man as I am," replied the railroad king, with conscious pride.

"I made half a million in a single operation last week."

"Yes, I understood that you had caught some of the knowing ones pretty heavily."

"I made 'em squeal," responded the other, grimly.

"Some of these smart, small fellows, who think they can see further into a millstone than the man who picked it, undertook to depreciate the value of the railroad stocks in which I have a heavy interest."

"They saw nothing but disaster in the future, everything was going to smash, and so they sold stocks that they didn't possess, trusting that when the time for delivery came the shares would be so much lower than the figure at which they sold that they could make a handsome profit out of the speculation."

"The news of the raid came to my ears; I let them go on, making no sign, but after their contracts were all made and the bottom of the market seemed to have entirely dropped out, I commenced buying right and left; sustained by me and my followers, who were all in the same boat, stocks went up instead of down, and so, instead of making a profit, these sharp fellows were brought to the verge of ruin, and I and my associates fairly coined money."

"So I understood. Well, under the circumstances, then, the hundred thousand dollars won't trouble you any; it is only the idea of being obliged to yield to the rascals."

"We can't expect to have everything our own way in this world," Carrickford remarked, philosophically.

"And then, you know, after I once got my girl back in my hands I could spend a million if I liked to hunt these rascals down without being haunted by the fear that my daughter's life would be endangered by the pursuit."

"That idea is a capital one," the old detective exclaimed. "And upon my word I think you have hit upon the correct plan."

"First we will ransom your daughter. There isn't any doubt in my mind that this lawyer will speedily bring you in communication with the gang who have possession of her. He is their agent, of course, and acting as their mouthpiece, although he pretended that he didn't know anything about the matter except what he had read in the newspapers."

"Then, during the transaction of this business, we may be able to get some clew which will aid us to hunt the scoundrels down after we have once got your daughter safely out of their hands."

"Yes, I'll spend a million in the matter without grudging the money!" Carrickford declared. "And if I can again lay this Harry Carrickford by the heels—if he is at the back of the matter as I suspect—I will see that this time he shall not escape the punishment which the law provides for such scoundrels as he."

"We'll succeed in trapping the gang after we get your child out of their clutches!" the detective asserted, confidently. "In my mind there isn't the least doubt of it."

Nothing else of interest to our readers took

place during the rest of the ride, and so we will leave the two and return to the point from which they started.

The reader is already familiar with the particulars of the interview between the criminal lawyer and the intruding Chinaman, and which ended with the helpless Kittleman, bound and gagged, being transported to the little room up-stairs by his captor.

After being deposited in the corner, among the empty boxes, as little able to help himself as a new-born babe, the state of mind in which the lawyer found himself can better be imagined than described.

He heard the key turn in the wards when the Chinaman locked the door after closing it, and then the soft patter of the heathen's footsteps as they died away in the distance.

Kittleman was in despair.

His situation was one of great peril.

The chances were about a thousand to one that he would not be released from his unpleasant predicament until the Chinaman chose to return.

And suppose he should not return?

The cold sweat poured out of the lawyer's brow and stood in waxen-like drops upon his face as he reflected upon the likelihood of such a thing occurring.

There wasn't any reason why the Chinaman should wish to leave him there to die a lingering death of torture.

And die he surely would in a few brief hours unless he was released, for it was not in human nature to endure the strain thus rudely put upon it.

The Chinaman of course was a detective in disguise—undoubtedly the same fellow who had played so prominent a part in the fight upon the Palisades.

A good man at his business, too, for by his strategy he had succeeded in obtaining information from the lawyer that otherwise could not have been obtained.

And as he had accomplished his purpose there wasn't any reason for wishing to harm the man who had given the information.

Of course the idea of locking him in the room was to prevent him from warning this mysterious captain that the detectives were on his track, and so enable him to make his escape before the satellites of the law should be able to seize him.

Not that the lawyer believed that the detectives, even though possessed of a knowledge of the place to which the captain's letters were directed, would be able to seize him.

You can't catch an old bird with chaff, and the mysterious personage who so persistently kept himself in the background was not likely to be discovered by the first bloodhound who hit upon his trail.

But how soon would the detective come back and release him from his awful plight or send some one to look after him?

That was the momentous question, and the lawyer felt as if he was going crazy when he reflected upon the matter.

For a good two hours Kittleman wrestled with this question, then his strength began to fail and his mind to wander.

It was plain that he could not endure the torture much longer—insensibility would soon come and then death might follow.

But just as he began to sink under the strain a key turned in the lock and three men came into the room.

It was the agent of the house and two prospective tenants who wished to look at the apartment.

Their surprise was great when they discovered the lawyer.

The agent recognized and made haste to release the lawyer and when he reached his office down-stairs his first task was to send a warning letter by a messenger-boy to the mysterious captain.

And then hot in anger hurried to police headquarters to complain of the outrage that the disguised detective had committed upon him.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### ANOTHER LINK.

WHEN Kittleman arrived at Police Headquarters and demanded to see the chief on urgent business, being well known, he was at once conducted to the office of the superintendent.

As the old saying has it, he had been nursing his wrath to keep it warm, and he was chock-full of indignation when he confronted the august ruler of the New York Police Department.

Briefly, but in fiery language, he described how he had been treated, and demanded the immediate punishment of the aggressor.

The superintendent had at first listened to the statement with an incredulous smile.

The tale was so wild that he was under the impression that the lawyer was either trying to fool him, or else he had been the victim of a well-planned practical joke, but when he suggested this Kittleman indignantly repudiated the idea.

The lawyer had judged it wise to make a clean breast of it to the superintendent, and had admitted that he had received a letter from a party who wrote under an assumed name in regard to ransoming the abducted girl.

Kittleman knew that he would not endanger his client by putting the police superintendent in possession of the information, for the fact was already known to the detective, disguised as a Chinaman, and then too he had warned the "captain" by means of the letter intrusted to the messenger-boy that the mysterious Chinese Detective was on his track, and with such an accomplished rascal as the unknown captain evidently was, after such a hint, he would take measures to prevent the Chinese Detective from gaining any advantage by means of the information which he had wrung from the lawyer.

"Well, Kittleman, don't you think you were rather risky in having anything to do with such an affair?" the chief asked.

"Not at all, superintendent," the other answered, readily.

He had come prepared to meet just such a question, and had his reason for acting in the matter all ready.

"Oh, no, superintendent, I thought I would accept the case just as I would any other."

"Of course I wrote back to the fellow that I would prefer to act for Mr. Carrickford instead of for him, but that was merely whittling the thing down to a fine point."

"I've defended many a murderer in my time, but that don't make me an accessory to the crime."

"The abduction of the girl was an accomplished fact. The police had not succeeded in recovering her—"

"An, but we have clews, you know," interrupted the superintendent, who would not let the opportunity pass to get in the stale old assertion which always springs readily to the lips of all police officials in all countries when baffled by a difficult case.

"Oh, of course, I understand all about that!" exclaimed the lawyer, contemptuously.

"I never knew of a case yet in which the police didn't have 'clews,' but, somehow, the criminal doesn't always materialize, on the principle that there's many a slip between the cup and the lip, I suppose."

"Well, I will admit that the boys don't always succeed, but in this case I think they will."

"I won't dispute with you in regard to that. Of course I don't know what facts are in possession of the police department."

"But you must admit, superintendent, when a man hears the cry of wolf so constantly without any wolf putting in an appearance, he begins to have his doubts in regard to the truth of the statement."

The police chief nodded. He knew that the lawyer was speaking words that could not be gainsaid.

"Well, as I have stated, the case was all wrapped up in mystery, and when this captain—whoever he is, put himself in communication with me in regard to giving the girl up for a ransom, I saw no harm in going into the matter."

"There was a big fee in the case for myself, and the prospect, too, of restoring the girl to her father was an agreeable one."

"Carrickford is rich—if he was struck for a stake of a million he could stand it easily enough."

"It isn't as much to him as a few hundred would be to men like you and me."

Again the superintendent nodded, for this statement was true enough.

"I have acted fair and aboveboard in the matter, and I am willing to have my conduct in the matter judged by any committee of lawyers or judges that you can scare up in this or any other city!" Kittleman declared, in honest indignation.

"And the idea that this infernal detective of yours—this fellow disguised as a Chinaman, should have the impudence to pick the lock of my private office, attack me with a sandbag—for it was with some such weapon he laid me out—and then bind me hand and foot, put a gag in my mouth, and with a knife at my heart force me to betray the secrets of a client, it is an outrage for which I will have satisfaction!"

"Superintendent, I can show you where the scoundrel cut the skin right over my heart with the point of his infernal knife, which was as sharp as a razor!"

And the lawyer in his indignation stamped up and down the room.

The aged superintendent was amazed, for he knew not what to make of the affair.

He understood, of course, that the disguised detective had gained an important clew which might lead to the discovery of the girl, and that if he had not threatened the lawyer as he did, Kittleman would never have spoken.

"It certainly was a most atrocious way of getting at the facts," the police chief admitted, "and neither the authorities nor the law would sanction such a thing for a moment."

"Then I demand that this accursed Chinese detective be punished for his murderous assault upon me!" cried the lawyer.

"Yes, but I don't know anything about the



fellow. He's not one of my men. I'm as much in the dark in regard to him as you are."

"Is that so?" asked the lawyer, bewildered.

"Truth, upon my honor."

"The fellow is some private bloodhound and, as far as I can learn, he is a genuine Chinaman."

"Inspector Byrnes, who, you know, is at the head of the detective department, has received some communications from him, giving important information in regard to this abduction case, but aside from that the inspector knows no more about him than I do."

"Well, I demand that he be punished anyway!" said Kittleman.

"Of course, certainly. When the fellow comes forward and makes himself known, as he will surely, after he has hunted down this gang of scoundrels, you put in your complaint and I will see that due attention is paid to it."

"Is that all you can do for me?" growled the lawyer in dissatisfaction as he turned to depart.

"My dear fellow, above all men in the world you ought to understand that there are certain formalities in all such matters as this."

"I can't order the fellow to be arrested and hanged on the instant just because you make a charge against him."

"The law must take its course as usual."

"The whole idea is, you think this Chinese scoundrel is going to catch the abductors of the girl and you are resolved not to interfere with him."

"I'm not the Czar of Russia with power to arrest men without due process of law!" the superintendent replied, testily.

"The courts are open to you; go, make your statement and swear out a warrant."

"You're a lawyer; you ought to know what to do."

"I'll be even with the scoundrel!" exclaimed Kittleman as he withdrew from the apartment in deep disgust.

His first impulse was to go immediately before a police magistrate and swear out a warrant, but on the way cool reflection told him that he had better keep quiet about the matter.

He had not suffered any material damage, although terribly frightened.

His story would make him the laughing-stock of the city, for all New York would be apt to roar with delight at the novel way in which the Chinaman had played it upon the great criminal lawyer, and so he concluded to say nothing of his wrongs until he found out who the Chinese detective really was and then he would watch for an opportunity to "go for him."

So the lawyer returned to his office.

And now our tale takes a leap forward to the morning of the next day.

It was about ten o'clock when a full-bearded, middle-aged man entered the central office of the Telephone Company.

The man was richly dressed and his bronzed face, jet-black hair and flowing beard, as well as his peculiar manner, denoted that he was a foreigner.

"I wish to reach a gentleman whose name I have forgotten," he said to the clerk. "But I would know the name if I heard it again."

"His number, I think, is B, one thousand and one."

The clerk turned to his register.

"One thousand and one, B, is Mr. Daniel Rochville."

"That does not seem to be the name; what is his business?"

"Broker, in Wall street."

"No, no, that is not my man. I must have got the wrong number. I have it among my memoranda at home and will seek it out."

The stranger departed. Nothing much this!

No! only another link in the chain which the Chinese detective was so slowly but surely forging.

#### CHAPTER XXXIII.

##### A DOUBLE LIFE.

DANIEL ROCHVILLE was a well-known man in Wall street, amid the dens of the "bears" and the pastures of the "bulls."

Yet the walls of the Stock Exchange had only known him for a few years.

It was only some five years now since he had made his appearance in the arena sacred to the god, great Mammon.

In Wall street and amid the temples of the "money-changers," there is a deal of romance if the seeker after that sort of thing only knows where to look for it.

The story of Daniel Rochville was a case in point.

Just about five years before the date of which we write, Daniel Rochville, who was French by birth, but spoke English as fluently as though he was "native and to the manner," landed one pleasant noon from a French ship which had just been warped into her berth in one of the docks near the foot of Wall street.

And the young man whose entire earthly possessions consisted of the plain black suit of clothes which he wore and some twenty silver francs in his pocket, walked up the street intent upon finding a broker's office where he might change his foreign money for good United States coin.

Rochville was a political refugee, so he said, and had smuggled himself on board the ship at the French port, as his only hope of escaping a life sentence to the penal settlements of New Caledonia, for offenses committed against the Government.

He had cunningly found a hiding-place amid the cargo in the hold, and having provided himself with a small supply of provisions, did not make his appearance until the ship had been three days at sea.

The master of the vessel who was a staunch upholder of the Government, stormed when the stowaway made his appearance, for he suspected that he was a political refugee.

The young man denied it, however, and protested that it was all on account of a woman he had fled from France, and to save himself from the vengeance of the friends of the lady he had been compelled to flee.

He had money to pay his passage and asked no favors but to be allowed to remain on the ship until she reached New York.

And as the captain couldn't very well throw his volunteer passenger overboard, he was compelled to grant the request.

The young man found the money-changers, transformed his French francs into American lucre, and then strolled slowly up the street until he came to the Stock Exchange.

It chanced to be one of the exciting days when values fluctuated wildly, and fortunes were being made and lost every minute.

It was one of Emanuel Carrickford's field days.

He had by skillful management induced the speculators to sell thousands of shares of stocks in which he was interested, stocks which they did not possess, and now when the time for delivery came, he had suddenly become a rampant bull in these particular stocks, and the price of the shares had doubled since the board opened.

"Settle at my terms," he said to the men whom he had thus caught upon the hip, "and settle quickly, too, or you will rue it."

Ruin was in the air.

And one desperate man who had seen his fortune melt into thin air like some unsubstantial dream, crazed by the loss of his all, determined to wreak summary vengeance upon the man to whom he ascribed the calamity.

He lay in wait for the railroad king outside his broker's office, and when Carrickford, with a grim smile upon his face, full of triumph at the success of his scheme to turn the tables upon his foes, who, believing they had caught him in a tight place, had conspired to beat him, helpless, to the ground, the ruined man, who was a big, burly fellow, caught Carrickford by the throat and dragged him to a railing near by which guarded a basement entrance, intending to throw him down the steps.

That the railroad king would have been severely if not fatally injured, if his assailant had succeeded in his purpose, is certain.

But the young Frenchman, the only one who chanced to be near enough to interfere, sprung to the rescue, without knowing or caring aught in regard to the motives of the quarrel.

He was a muscular fellow, in the full vigor of youth, and taking the broker in the rear, had him at as much disadvantage as he had Carrickford.

The railroad king too struggled manfully the moment he recovered from the surprise of the unexpected attack, and between the pair the assailant came to grief.

All in the neighborhood, too, hurried to the scene, and the struggling men were separated.

A cab was near at hand, and Carrickford escaped into it, carrying his rescuer with him, and was driven to his office.

One peculiar trait of the millionaire commended him to the world.

He never forgot a friend or failed to reward in the most liberal manner any service that was ever done him.

"You have saved my life, possibly, to-day," he said to the young Frenchman, after they were safely in the cab and being driven rapidly from the scene of the trouble.

"Who are you, and is there anything I can do for you?"

Rochville told his story frankly—not the tale with which he had regaled the ears of the ship captain, whom he was afraid to trust for fear the vessel might meet some French ship homeward bound and the skipper would have him transferred to the other craft if he discovered he was a refugee from justice.

The young man was well educated, came of a good family, and had been trained in a banker's office in Paris.

"I'll start you as a broker here and give you a good share of my business," Carrickford declared, and the railroad king was as good as his word.

With such a patron was it any wonder that the young man prospered?

He seemed too not unworthy of the confidence and trust reposed in him by the millionaire, for never had mortal in this world a more devoted adherent.

Rochville too was an unusually good man of business, ready in resources, fertile in devices,

always cool and self-contained, a fellow possessed of a wonderful nerve, who never lost his head, no matter how great the excitement.

It was not strange then that the wise men of the street thought well of the young man and prophesied that he would be one of the magnets of the country in another ten years.

In fact few men in New York had more powerful backing, for the railroad king believed in the young Frenchman, and aided him in every possible way.

He was a welcome guest at the house of the millionaire, and the beautiful daughter of Carrickford and the young broker were often seen together in public places.

It was the common rumor in up-town circles that the two would end by making a match of it.

Some officious friends had even suggested the probability of such a thing to the millionaire, but he gave no heed to the idea.

"She is too young yet to think of such a thing. Six or eight years hence will be time enough to talk about her marrying. I do not believe in these early marriages," he was wont to reply.

And from the manner in which he spoke his confidential friends came to the conclusion that he would not be displeased if his daughter and the rising broker should make a match, and every one almost that was at all acquainted with the matter believed that it was more than probable.

There was only one who felt that it was not only improbable but impossible, and that was Rochville himself.

From the very beginning he had had his eyes upon the girl, and had done his best to make her like him well enough to be willing to link her fortunes for life to him.

But the girl received his attentions as a matter of course, and within the last year, growing bolder, Rochville had ventured to try and play the lover, and was both astonished and angered to discover that the young lady only looked upon him in the light of a sort of an upper servant, a man who had thriven, thanks to her father's bounty, and woke to the knowledge that she would be as likely to look upon the coachman or the butler in the light of a sweetheart as him.

It was a disagreeable fact, but Rochville was wise enough not to attempt to ignore the truth.

One thing only was in his favor.

The young lady did not encourage any other admirer, and seemed entirely free from the girl's propensity of having sighing cavaliers dangling at her heels.

He thought that if he made a waiting race there might be a chance to win the prize yet.

To the world at large Rochville bore a splendid reputation, but like many another man who carries his head high in this world, his associates did not know him as he really was.

Steady as a clock, not given to dissipation in any shape, such was his Wall street reputation.

But among the gilded haunts of vice up-town which flourish when the shades of night cover the earth, Al Smith, as the broker called himself when he threw all restraint to the wind and gave a loose rein to his passions, was the king of all the gay fellows.

A deep drinker and a heavy player, generally too an unsuccessful one, for though he was too old a gambler to be fleeced like a greenhorn, yet luck seldom smiled upon him, and his losses were sometimes immense.

If the millionaire could only have known the truth in regard to his protégé, he would have trembled at the career which the young Frenchman was pursuing.

#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

##### HOT ON THE SCENT.

WALL street, New York, is the money-market of the New World, and as the commercial pulse beats, its throbs can be measured there and there alone.

From ten to two of any week-day the street is a sight with its busy multitude of people hurrying along as if their lives depended upon their haste.

Few women are to be seen on the street; the male element predominates a hundred to one, and men of all classes jostle elbows in the most democratic manner, from the bank-president and millionaire down to the wretched tramp who hobbles along the street seeking to gather a few of the crumbs falling from the rich man's table.

Wall street may be compared to some insatiate monster who thrives at the expense of the victims enticed within reach of the devouring jaws.

For one who wins in Wall street a thousand lose, and the ruin of many a happy and prosperous man dates from the time when he was induced to try a "flyer" in the stock market.

It is like gambling; there is a fascination about it for some men that is impossible for them to resist, and once they begin they cannot leave off while a dollar remains.

And with some of them so great is the influence exerted by the baleful demon Speculation, that even when they are reduced to poverty they still haunt the locality, and gossip about the rise and fall of prices with as much interest as



though they had thousands of dollars depending upon the result.

And on this morning of which we write, a man of this class stood on the corner of New and Wall streets, listening with all his ears to the conversation of some young brokers' clerks, who happening to meet, had paused for a few moments to exchange news with each other—"swap lies," would probably be nearer the truth, to use our expressive Americanism.

And the man whose substance had gone to feed just such men, listened and implicitly believed all the idle rumor that the clerks interchanged.

This, by the by, was on the same morning that the Frenchman had quitted Boloni's saloon with the intention of seeing a little of life as it was to be found on the Bowery.

The man who had been wrecked in Wall street was well in years, had been a prosperous man until the demon of speculation entered his mind; but now that he had squandered all that he had acquired, he was dependent upon his children, who, luckily for him, were able to earn enough to keep the family together.

But as he eagerly watched the brokers he was not conscious that he in his turn was watched.

A dark-faced gentleman, with curly black hair and a beard of the same hue—a foreigner undoubtedly, from his appearance, had halted near the old man, and was observing him fully as intently as he watched the gabbling clerks.

And when the group broke up and the men went off about their business, the stranger seized upon the opportunity to address the old man.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said, advancing to the side of the old gentleman, "I am in search of a little information, and I thought, perhaps, that you might be able to give it."

The old man straightened up with pride; the stranger addressed him with an air as though he believed he was one of the notabilities of the street.

"I'm pretty well acquainted with the way the cat jumps," he responded. "In fact, I guess I know about as much as any of the sharp ones that you can pick up on the street."

"Do you know Mr. Daniel Rochville?"

"Do I know him?" and the old man heaved a sigh. "Indeed I do, and to my sorrow. He advised me to go short of a certain stock once, and I was fool enough to be guided by his counsel, and the result was I was utterly cleaned out."

"His reputation is not very good then?" the stranger queried.

"Oh, yes, it's good enough. I don't suppose he's any worse than the rest. I was a donkey, you know, to allow myself to be influenced by him. If I had stood off and watched the market myself I would have done a great deal better."

"Where is his office?"

"Right over yonder," and the old man pointed to the opposite side of Wall street.

"Ah, yes, I see his sign. I am a stranger in the city and I happened by accident to hear the name of Daniel Rochville spoken, and as I was once acquainted with a gentleman of that name in Europe, who was said to have come to America, I was curious to learn if it was my old-time friend. He is a middle-aged gentleman—say forty-five?"

"Oh, no," the other responded, quickly, "Rochville is fully ten years younger."

"It is possible, then, that he is not the man I seek. Is his hair iron-gray and does he wear a full beard?"

"Oh, no, that does not answer to his description at all. Rochville is a youngish-looking man; doesn't really appear to be over twenty-five or thirty."

"The gentleman I mean is a married man with three or four children."

"No, no; Rochville is not married. He is a bachelor and resides with his sister in West Twenty-fifth street. I happen to know all about it because I live in the next block. He has a little two-story house and lives in quite modest style for a man who is reputed to be as rich as he is."

"I have a curiosity to see if it is the same man as the one I knew abroad, but it does not seem possible, because if my memory serves me right, the man was fully forty-five and looked older; but still it is possible he may have changed his appearance. Hair-dye and a skillful barber will sometimes work wonders. Can you give me his address?"

"Certainly," said the old man, taking the memorandum-book and pencil which the other proffered. "But why do you not call upon him at his office?"

"I was informed at the Hoffman House, which I believe is his head-quarters, that he was out of town and would not be back until tomorrow," answered the other.

"Yes, it is a dull time and there is little business stirring, so that the brokers can afford to take a day off," remarked the other, as he wrote the address in the memorandum-book and handed it back.

"Much obliged; will you come and lunch with me?" and the stranger nodded in the direction of the nearest restaurant.

The offer was eagerly accepted, for such wind-

falls were rare, and when the pair parted, the old gentleman was the richer by a good dinner and a ten-dollar bill which the stranger, in the kindest manner, had pressed upon him as a temporary loan.

After parting with his guest the unknown went directly to Rochville's office, and asked the clerk if he could have the pleasure of a personal interview with the broker.

The statement in regard to the absence of the broker, which the stranger had said he had received at the Hoffman House, was evidently incorrect, for the clerk, after a careful survey of the applicant, as if to satisfy himself that he was a person upon whom it would be safe to confer such an honor, responded that if his business was important and required Mr. Rochville's personal attention, no doubt that gentleman could be seen.

"I have a considerable sum of money which I thought of investing in some stock operations," the stranger explained, "and I have been told that if I secured Mr. Rochville's advice I would be certain to succeed in making money."

"Well, I don't think that any of our customers can have much cause to complain," remarked the clerk, complacently, and then he conducted the gentleman to where the broker sat in his private office.

Introducing the customer—Mr. Adam Brown, London, England, was his title—he explained the nature of the business upon which the stranger had come and then withdrew.

The broker received the gentleman in the most cordial manner.

When was a broker ever known to be otherwise than agreeable to the customer who makes his appearance with the intention of investing largely.

The stranger sat down and explained that he had not been long in the country, but from what he had seen, had come to the conclusion that a man with sufficient capital might be able to make an honest penny by investing in stocks, but not having full confidence in his own judgment, he had determined to seek the advice of some broker thoroughly posted in regard to the market.

Happening to mention the matter to one of the clerks at the Hoffman House in a casual sort of way, that gentleman recommended Mr. Rochville, and so he had come to see him in regard to the matter.

About five thousand dollars was the amount that he proposed to invest as a beginning.

Of course the broker knew of half a dozen stocks which seemed to promise a good profit if handled in the right way.

"Of course it is not in the power of man to predict with absolute certainty in regard to these matters," Rochville said in conclusion, "for, if it was, why we smart fellows in the street would be all millionaires."

"But I think I can see as far ahead as any of the sharps, and you can have the benefit of all I know."

The stranger expressed himself as being satisfied with the outlook; said he would get his funds in shape and then make a speedy investment, after which he departed.

And after he was gone, a sudden idea came to Rochville.

The stranger's face had seemed familiar to him and yet he could not remember of ever having met him before.

"I have it now!" he exclaimed. "I have seen the man before, but not as he appears now. He is disguised and does not appear in his own proper person. He is a spy and I must be on my guard."

#### CHAPTER XXXV.

##### GAINING AN ENTRANCE.

As the aged wreck had said, Rochville's abode in Twenty-fifth street was quite a modest-looking house, and there was nothing about it to lead one to suspect it was the abode of one of the leading Wall street brokers.

For a man of his supposed wealth Rochville lived extremely plainly, and few of the dwellers near at hand had any idea that their unpretending neighbor was one of the bright lights of the stock exchange.

About an hour after the dark-faced stranger left the broker's office in Wall street he made his appearance in Twenty-fifth street.

He walked slowly by the house where the broker resided, took a good view of the premises, although from the cautious way in which he acted no one could have told that he was taking any particular notice of the place, then he made his way into the saloon on the corner.

Ordering a glass of ale, he got into a conversation with the barkeeper, who was one of those genial gentlemen, eager to impart information, who are generally to be found in all places of this kind.

The stranger dropped a casual remark that an acquaintance of his, a Mr. Rochville lived somewhere in the neighborhood.

And the barkeeper immediately replied that he knew the gentleman well, and further added that his house was one of the small brick ones in the middle of the block.

"He's a sharp fellow, Rochville, one of the

Wall street sharps, you know," the stranger observed, as he finished his glass of ale.

The barkeeper immediately assumed a knowing look and winked in a mysterious manner, then nodded sagely, as much as to say that what he didn't know about the Wall street broker was not worth knowing.

And it was plainly perceptible, too, that he was willing to tell all that he knew without much urging.

"Give me another glass of ale," said the stranger, "and will you join me?" he added.

"As a rule I never drink behind the bar," responded the presiding genius, with a leer, "but on this occasion, seeing that it is a gentleman like yourself, I will take a small snifter, but I never drink anything stronger than gin."

And after delivering himself of this well-worn joke, he proceeded to place the liquid refreshments on the counter.

"Rochville is a patron of yours then, I suppose," said the gentleman.

"Well, yes; I s'pose I could say he is, but you can bet your bottom dollar that this gin-mill or any other in the neighborhood will never get rich out of what he spends for drinks," replied the barkeeper, with an air of supreme contempt.

"Spends his money down-town, I suppose; goes in for wine at Delmonico's?" the other suggested.

"I reckon you're out there, though as far as wine-drinking goes, mebbe you know more about it than I do; but from what I've seen of him, I should say that he ain't the kind of man to throw away much money in that way."

"Oh, he's a sharper, I tell yer! and if he ain't rich he ought to be, for he keeps tight hold of the dimes."

"But his man, though—his confidential servant, who looks after the house, is a different sort of a chap; he's a hummer from Hummersville if there ever was one."

"Ah, he's got a man, then?" remarked the stranger, in an indifferent sort of way, as though he took no particular interest in the conversation, but was merely talking for the sake of passing away time.

"Yes, he's a little, middle-aged Englishman—that is, he says he's an Englishman, but he looks a deuced sight more like a Frenchman, 'cos he's a dark-faced, dried-up sort of a fellow, with the wickedest pair of eyes that I ever saw."

"Your description really interests me; he must be an odd sort of a man."

"Oh, he is, just as queer as they make 'em; takes all sorts of odd fits when he gits on a tear, and I tell you he manages things mighty cute, too."

"How's that?" the stranger inquired.

"Well, you see, I've kinder got an idee that his boss, Rochville, you know, don't catch on to this spreeing business at all."

"Johnson—Peter Johnson is his name—didn't used to drink half as much as he does now."

"He used to go light, but for the last week he has been h'isting fearfully. He'll come in here, you know, about ten o'clock in the morning, right after the boss has gone down-town, and he'll stand at this counter and jest fill himself up, chock-full."

"He ain't one of the staggering kind, you know; he's a still drunkard, and when he's got his load on, so full, you know, that it is as much as he kin do to talk, no one who didn't know him would be apt to discover that there was anything the matter with him. Walk out as straight as a ramrod, you know."

"It's a good thing for him that it is so, or else he would be apt to get his walking-papers from the broker," the other observed.

"That's so; I said as a kind of a joke one day, you know, when he was filling up on French brandy at twenty-five cents a lick, I said to him, said I, 'Sport, you had better look out that you don't git too full or the boss would be apt to kick up a row.'

"He was jest loaded up enough for to take it as a joke, and he winked and said:

"Don't you be scared; I'm up to snuff any way you may take me. If the boss knew I was crooking my elbow in this 'ere loose way, I don't doubt that there would be the biggest kind of a row, but I don't calculate to let him know anything about it; you see I promised him that I wouldn't touch the stuff except to take a night-cap afore I went to bed; but what on earth is a man like myself to do?"

"When he clears out down-town to attend to business I get lonesome. I'm used to an active life, I am, and this being shut up in the house with nobody but a fool of a gal to talk to, ain't what it's cracked up to be."

"And he is right about the gal!" exclaimed the barkeeper, abruptly breaking off the thread of the story.

"She's a regular greenhorn, you know; a Dutch gal, only been over about three months and can't speak a dozen words of good United States talk."

"Miss Rochville—that's the broker's sister—s'pose you didn't know he had a sister?"

"No, I did not."

"Well, he has, and she's as sharp as they make 'em, too; she can speak the lingo, but she ain't at home much. She's a painter—an artist



or something of that sort and is away most of the time.

"When the cuss let out 'bout how dull it was for him with nobody but the Dutch gal to talk to, and she's a squat, slab-sided galoot, ugly enough for to frighten a hoss into fits, I up and axed him why he didn't go in for to get a better job, but he only laughed in a silly sort of way and allowed that he had a pretty fat thing of it as it was; a reg'lar picnic; them was the very identical words he used.

"The captain would raise merry blazes if he caught me on the booze, but I'm jest fly enough for to have my lush when I want it without his knowing anything about it."

"Who did he mean by the captain?" the stranger asked in the most innocent way imaginable.

"Why, his boss of course, and there's something strange about that, too; the cuss is always as careful and polite as you please in speaking about his boss when he's all right.

"Always calls him Mister Rochville, you know, but jest as soon as he gets his still on he commences the captain business."

"Well, that is odd," observed the other.

"Yes, and once in a while he tries to give me the old gag that he's got a big pull on the captain, and that the boss couldn't get along without him nohow," and the bartender elevated his nose significantly, as much as to say that he didn't place any credence in the statement.

"Of course, of course, that's the old story," said the stranger.

"Oh, he's given me a lot of that kind of wind when he's been filled clear 'way up to the neck, you know!" the barkeeper asserted with an air of disgust.

"He's given out too, once or twice, that his boss had let him in for a good thing—"

"In the stock-market, I suppose!" exclaimed the other eagerly, betraying a deal of interest.

"Yes, of course, I suppose so, but I didn't take much stock in it."

"It may be possible, you know, that Rochville sometimes drops a hint of how things are going to work," the stranger suggested.

"By Jove! do you know, I'd like to get a chance to have a talk with him! I've got a bit of money which I can use just now, and if I could get a hint from him I'd be willing to pay well for it."

"I can fix it for you as easy as rolling off a log!" the barkeeper exclaimed, with an air of lofty pride.

"You see I've been giving the cuss a lot of wind lately about a rich uncle of mine up in the country, and how I was going to get him to come down to the city and rope him into a stock speculation. It was all gas, of course, but I couldn't let him do all the blowing, you know."

"Now, to-day, I promised to send him down a box of cigars when they came in; we were out of the kind he wanted, but after he was gone I found a box. You can take it down and introduce yourself as my uncle—Traynor is my name, Mike Traynor—and you can say that I put you up for to pump him for some points. You've got a clear field, for the boss and his sister won't be home until about five, and the servant gal is down in the basement."

The stranger thanked the barkeeper warmly for his kind assistance, promised that if he succeeded in making a successful deal, he should have a "stake" out of it, and then departed with the cigars.

#### CHAPTER XXXVI. A SURPRISE.

DIRECTLY to the house of the broker went the stranger, rung the door-bell, and in answer thereto a dark-faced, short, thick-set man appeared.

There wasn't any doubt in the stranger's mind that this was the Peter Johnson to whom the obliging barkeeper had referred.

"Is this Mr. Johnson?" he inquired.

"Yes, that is my name," responded the other, in a rather surly way, but from the appearance of the man's face, the stranger came to the conclusion that it was the liquor which he had imbibed which made him appear surly rather than any disposition on his part to be disobligeing.

"My name is Traynor, James Traynor," said the stranger, giving the first name which came into his head. "I am uncle to Mike Traynor, in the saloon, you know, at the corner."

Johnson nodded; he knew the saloon and the urbane barkeeper only too well.

"I've just come to town, and of course dropped in to see Mike the first thing. Mike has been wanting me to come to town for quite a time, as he said if I had a little money to risk he could put me in the way of making a good thing, so I got my cash together and came down."

"He has just explained to me that you are the man who can post me, and if you will be kind enough to give me a few points, I'm willing to pay liberally for the information."

"Oh, yes, I'm posted," responded the other, with a wise shake of the head.

"Here's a box of cigars, by the way, that Mike wanted me to bring down to you."

"Yes, yes; well, walk in, Mr. Traynor; I'm glad to see you, and if there's any man who can

give you points on Wall street, I'm the boy who can do the job up to the queen's taste."

He stood aside to allow the stranger to pass into the house, and then closed the door carefully behind him.

"Come up-stairs to my den," he said; "we'll be nice and quiet there, and I've got some good brandy with which we can wet our whistles while we talk."

"That's a capital idea," the other observed, as he followed the host up the stairs.

Mr. Johnson occupied a back room on the second story; it was plainly furnished, and from the appearance of the round table in the center of the apartment, with its litter of bottles and glasses, it was evident that the spree which Rochville's confidential man had begun at the corner saloon had been continued in the privacy of his own apartment.

"Help yourself to a chair, and try a little of the brandy!" exclaimed Johnson, filling out a liberal supply of the generous liquor in two glasses one of which he pushed toward Mr. Traynor.

"Thanks, here's success to both of us!"

The liquor was duly dispatched and then the stranger said:

"I've got just about five thousand dollars that I can afford to risk—"

"Five thousand!" interrupted Johnson; "well, that's a tidy little sum."

"Now if you know of any chance for me to make something handsome by the use of that money—"

"A chance!" exclaimed the other, "why, I know a hundred! A man like myself who is up to all the tricks in the game—but is this all good and solid—no wind about it? Have you got the ducats so you can put your hand on them without any trouble?"

The stranger rose to his feet and drew a bulky-appearing wallet from the inner breast pocket of his coat and threw it down carelessly on the table.

"The money is in that pocket-book," he said. "Count it, and then you will be satisfied that I'm not telling you any falsehood when I say that I have that sum of money to invest."

The usually dull eyes of the other sparkled like the orbs of a beast of prey, stealing on its victim in the gloom of the night when he beheld the wallet apparently distended with bank-bills.

"Oh, yes, this looks like real old business," he remarked, as he bent over to examine the pocket-book.

This was the opportunity which the other desired and for which he had so skillfully planned.

He had thrust his hands carelessly, as it appeared, into the side pockets of the sack-coat which he wore, after casting the wallet upon the table.

And now, quick as a flash, out came his right hand, and the hand grasped the murderous weapon, originally devised by the savage Thugs of India, and now a favorite instrument of the modern ruffians, which is called a sand-club.

With wonderful quickness he struck a terrible blow at the head of Johnson as the latter stooped to examine the wallet.

But drunk as he was the other had sense enough to perceive the attack, and involuntarily he threw up his hands, and, in a measure, broke the force of the stroke.

It staggered him backward, however, and the stranger followed him up with the ferocity of a tiger.

Johnson was a natural-born fighter, though, and now that he understood what the other was about he offered a desperate resistance.

He evaded the second attack by a dextrous dodge, and closing in with the other essayed to grapple with him.

In the struggle the hat, wig and beard of the stranger were knocked off, and a howl of rage came from the throat of the assailed man as his eyes rested upon the yellow face of the Chinese Detective.

For it was our hero who in this disguise had penetrated to the lair of the Wall street broker.

The cry of rage was the last sound that Johnson was to have a chance to utter for some time, for hardly had the cry escaped from his lips when the assailant caught him by the throat with his muscular left hand, and with a single well-directed blow of the sand-club felled him to the floor.

Then hurriedly replacing his wig, hat and beard, the victor hurried to the front door which he opened noiselessly.

A covered express-wagon was drawn up by the curb-stone, not in front of the house exactly, but rather a little above it.

Two stout fellows were lounging by the back of the wagon, and the moment they saw the door of the broker's house cautiously opened, they proceeded to get out a large trunk from the wagon which they carried to the house, and from the way in which they handled the trunk one would have been apt to believe that it was pretty heavy.

The moment they were in the entry, though, and the door was closed, they threw open the lid, revealing that the trunk was empty, and then they hurried up-stairs in obedience to a motion from the acute detective.

They laid hold of Johnson, carried him down-stairs and stowed him away in the trunk—and, when the lid was opened, the holes which had been made in this novel vehicle so that the man who was to be placed therein could breathe, could plainly be seen.

In less time almost than it has taken to write a description of the affair, Johnson was lugged down-stairs and placed in the trunk, his hands and feet bound with a strong cord, and a gag placed in his mouth.

The cover was fastened down, and the two men carried the trunk out-doors again, placed it in the express-wagon and drove off.

There wasn't anything about this movement to excite any attention, and it did not.

Never in the world had an abduction been more boldly planned or more successfully carried out.

When the express-wagon had got out of the way the detective left the house, closing the door carefully behind him, and took his way to the corner saloon.

"What luck, pard?" asked the barkeeper, the moment he entered.

"None at all; he's too drunk to talk, and just as I got to the house he was going out."

"He said that at some other time he would have a talk with me, and that was all the satisfaction I could get."

"He's getting worse and worse," the barkeeper commented. "The still that he had on to-day was the toughest one yet, and the first thing you know the boss will catch on to him, and then it will be all up with his soft thing."

The other agreed with the barkeeper in this statement, then the two took a social glass of ale together, and the stranger departed.

The trick had been worked.

Rochville's confidential man was a prisoner in the hands of the bloodhound, who chose to use his own machinery rather than depend upon the more cumbersome agency of the law.

The detective had found a way to make the ruffian, Conkey Bill, and the wily Tombs lawyer talk, and if he could not learn what secrets were in possession of the entrapped men it would be strange.

He must be more than man if he did not yield to the "persuasive" ways of the odd genius, who in his own strange fashion was doing such really wonderful work in the man-hunting line.

Perhaps it was because he did not follow in the old ruts, but struck out into new paths, that such success attended him.

His proceedings were very irregular, of course, but then, possibly, he excused his act by quoting the old saying:

"The end justifies the means."

#### CHAPTER XXXVII. THE JOURNEY.

THE device adopted by the Chinaman in hiring the room in the opposite house put a stop to the game which the saloon-keeper intended to play.

"It doesn't matter," he remarked, after considering the matter.

"We know that he is a spy, and what does it signify why he watches, or who employs him?"

"Bah! it doesn't matter at all!" the son of Guadalupe observed.

"We can beat his game easily enough, now that we know what it is," the boy Henri declared.

"Yes, we know what he is up to, and he must be a more clever spy than I take him to be if he succeeds in bothering us at all now," Boloni said.

"Let me see," he remarked, after reflecting for a few minutes.

"I think you had best set out on your trip to-night," and he addressed the Frenchman.

"Henri here will go with you, so you can amuse yourself until that time in any way you like."

"That will suit me all right. I have some silver in my pocket and as I am a pretty fair billiard player, I may be able to pick up a few coins."

"I am told that on the Bowery there is to be found much sport."

"Amuse yourself as you please but be here by eleven to-night," the saloon-keeper remarked.

"And if you should chance to find a spy upon your track it will be enjoyment for you to lead him astray."

"Oh, trust me for that! I will lead him a rare chase!" and then with a graceful adieu, Durange sallied forth.

The other two watched to see if the Chinaman emerged from his ambush and gave chase, but no one came from the house.

"It is natural; why should he be suspected?" questioned Boloni.

"He might be, as he is a stranger and not one of the regular patrons of the house," the boy suggested.

"Ah, yes, but I do not believe that this spy has watched long enough to know who are patrons and who are not."

"What think of the brave, Henri?"

"He seems to be a dull brute," answered the boy.



"True, but that is the kind of a man that is required."

"Can he be trusted? I, for one, place little faith in him."

"Oh, no doubt he might be bought, but as he is a stranger in the country and without acquaintances, he will be more apt to prove faithful than a man who has some idea of how valuable is the stake for which we play."

"There is sense in that," the boy observed, thoughtfully. "But, somehow, I am not pleased with this fellow. He is too much of a boaster."

"Do you not think it would have been prudent to set a spy upon his track in order to see if he was all right?"

The saloon-keeper laughed at the idea.

"Bah, you are too full of suspicion; but thou canst not help it, I presume, it is in thy nature."

"Tranquilize your mind; this fellow is dull and boastful, but no doubt he is true to the backbone and a good workman, if some one with a head on his shoulders plans the job for him."

This ended the conversation on the subject and nothing more was said, although it was plainly to be seen that the boy was not satisfied.

The day wore away and a little before eleven o'clock Durange made his appearance.

He had evidently been drinking to excess and one of his eyes was slightly discolored.

"Hullo, hullo! what's the meaning of this?" the saloon-keeper inquired.

"Naught but a little quarrel in a saloon on the Bowery," replied the other with a laugh.

"Some of the gentlemen-sharpers picked me up for a simpleton. I allowed them to win four or five games for small stakes, then pretending to be exasperated by my losses, I demanded revenge and they gladly accommodated me."

"The stake was a good one and I won, by a scratch as it appeared; the scamps did not smoke the game and they tried it a second time and for a good stake, but then their eyes were open when in spite of his endeavors I beat their best player."

"They called me cheat and rascal, and one fellow slapped me in the face—"

"He has discolored thine eye," observed Boloni.

"It doesn't matter; I threw him through the window to pay for it," responded the other, coolly.

"There was a general fight and I escaped in the confusion, and here I am ready for duty."

"Drink no more or you will be amiss," cautioned the saloon-keeper.

"Not another drop. Be not afraid, I am an old soldier and know when I have enough."

"Hast thou been followed by any one?"

"Not by a soul. Oh, believe me, I kept my eyes about me."

"The yellow scoundrel has not stirred from his post all day long as far as I could see, and a couple of fellows who I am certain are police spies, for they were evidently disguised, have visited him twice to-day," the saloon-keeper said.

"The rascal will only have his labor for his pains, for he may watch here until he is gray without discovering anything worthy of notice," he continued.

And then addressing the boy, he said:

"Go out by the back way, Henri. This fellow is but a novice at his trade or he would guard every avenue."

Durange shook hands heartily with the saloon-keeper, after the Gallic fashion, and then followed the boy.

A horse and buggy stood at the corner of the street.

"This is for us," said Henri, as he untied the horse from the hitching-post.

"Aha, that is delightful!" exclaimed the other, who was walking rather unsteadily.

"The moon will soon be out, too; is it far we ride, *mon ami*?"

"I don't know; the journey I have never made," the boy answered, as he climbed into the buggy.

The Frenchman followed, but not without difficulty, for the liquor which he had imbibed so freely had rendered him decidedly unsteady on his feet.

The boy, who drove, sat on the left-hand side of the carriage and Durange on the right.

The buggy was a common, old-fashioned affair, and as the horse started the boy made a discovery which annoyed him.

There were no windows in either the sides or the back of the vehicle.

"Peste! that is a grand mistake!" he observed to Durange, calling his attention to the fact.

"We can only see what is in front of us."

"What difference does it make?" Durange inquired, settling himself back against the seat and endeavoring to arrange himself in a comfortable position so he could go to sleep.

"Why, if we cannot watch from the sides and in the rear, how can we tell that we are not followed?"

"Bah! you are too suspicious. There isn't any danger of that; we are too cunning for these police rats."

"I am not so sure of that, and instead of going to sleep, as you seem inclined to do, it would be far better to keep your eyes open and watch for the spies."

"I did but close my eyes to get them accustomed to the darkness," protested Durange, making a great effort to appear watchful and at the same time blinking like an owl.

"You are not an old hand at the business, as I am, friend Henri, or you would understand that that is the proper way to go to work."

An expression of contempt appeared on the finely-cut features of the boy, but he understood well enough that it was only a waste of time to attempt to argue with a man whose brains were muddled with liquor.

"I had best let the brute sleep," the boy muttered to himself, as the head of Durange again sunk back against the frame of the buggy-top.

"Then when we arrive at our destination he will be in a fit state to be seen."

Acting on this idea, the boy made no further attempts to keep the Frenchman awake, and soon from his heavy breathing it was evident that the potent liquor which he had swallowed had done its work, and he was bound in slumber's chain.

The boy drove along at a brisk pace, not attempting to force the animal, which was a good one.

The idea was to proceed so as not to attract any attention.

The boy was keen of eye, and as he drove along he kept a bright lookout, but did not succeed in detecting anything calculated to excite suspicion.

Broadway was soon reached, and the buggy joined the many vehicles rolling northward up New York's great thoroughfare.

As the carriage rolled around the corner into Broadway, the boy leaped out of the buggy and cast a rapid glance to the rear, but no spy was in sight.

But the moment the buggy disappeared around the corner a man darted out of a doorway in the middle of the block, in which he had momentarily concealed himself in anticipation of just such a movement, and hurried after the vehicle.

A short distance up Broadway a coupé with a liveried driver stood by the curbstone.

"That old-fashioned buggy!" said the man, briefly, to the driver, pointing up the street to the carriage containing the boy and man.

The spy then sprang into the carriage, which already contained four men, crowded in sardine fashion. Away went the coupé after the buggy and at a safe distance in the rear tracked it through Harlem and across the Third avenue bridge, and out until the open country beyond Mott Haven was reached.

Then the men dismounted from the vehicle and began to follow a plainly-defined trail.

#### CHAPTER XXXVIII.

##### A SURPRISE.

THE buggy went on its way at a rapid rate after reaching the open country. The French boy had kept a wary eye behind him all the way, but the driver of the coupé, while steadily following in the wake of the buggy, had lagged far enough in the rear to avoid discovery.

This was easy enough while the chase led through the streets of the city, but when once the buggy got out of the shadow of the houses, the spies were shrewd enough to understand that the chase could not be kept up by means of the coupé, and so they dismounted and proceeded on foot.

Of course, as the horse attached to the buggy was not trotting at the rate of fully ten miles an hour, the men on foot could not hope to keep it in sight, nor did they attempt so to do, although they proceeded at a brisk pace, walking in the middle of the street with their eyes on the ground, and every hundred feet or so some one of them would call his companion's attention to some article in the roadway.

The moon was bright, so that all objects were distinctly visible, and these trackers were following a trail of small white beans which had been dropped in the road some three or four hundred feet apart.

That these beans had some connection with the chase they were upon was evident, for when the men came to where a small road turned off abruptly to the right leading to the water, the spies, upon finding three beans dropped opposite to the road, turned into it without a moment's hesitation.

And the move was correct, for along this narrow, apparently unfrequented road, the trail of beans ran.

Leaving these trackers to follow up the trail like so many bloodhounds, we will return to the pair in the buggy.

In less than two hours from the time of their departure they arrived at their destination.

It was an old mansion with extensive grounds surrounded by a high stone wall, situated on a point of land which jutted out into the river.

It was a relic of the old days evidently, for everything about the place betrayed the withering hand of Old Father Time.

The mansion was built of stone, as was also the porter's lodge which guarded the gate, but as far as all outward inspection went, both were uninhabited.

This was not the case, however, for when the French boy drew rein at the gate, a massive,

solid wooden affair, which seemed almost strong enough to defy artillery, he gave vent to a shrill, peculiar whistle, and in a few moments the head of a man appeared above the gate.

"It is all right, Bill, it is I," said the boy.

The guardian of the portal is an old acquaintance of the reader's, for when he opened the gate, the hatchet-like face and red head of Conkey Bill appeared.

"I'm glad you came," said Bill, as the buggy passed in at the gate, and then after the gate was again closed and securely barred, the French boy leaped nimbly to the ground.

"What is the matter? is anything amiss?" the other asked, anxiously.

"Yes, the captain is afraid that he has been shadowed from the city."

"He has an idea that spies have been on his track all day long, but the spotters have worked the job so well that with all his tricks he was not able to catch them at it."

"It is this wretch of a Chinese Detective!" exclaimed the French boy, clinching his fists together, and with both force and voice betraying the anger he felt.

"He seems more like a devil than a man!"

"Right you are!" cried Conkey, "and I kin tell you w'ot it is, I, for one, don't believe that we'll get a moment's peace until we lay that cuss out for good and all."

"I agree with you, and the sooner it is done the better."

"But the first thing on the peppergram now is to git out of this 'ere," said Bill.

"Another move?" questioned the boy.

"Yes, afore the place is surrounded; the captain thinks that it is gitting a blame sight too hot in this 'ere locality for comfort, and he has only been waiting for your coming to perform the great vanishing act."

"Aha, that is wise—it is always well to take time by the forelock."

"The captain's little yacht lies off the little dock, and when he is once aboard of her with the girl and she spreads her wings, I reckon it will be as hard for the spotters to track her as it would be for them to follow a bird through the air."

"Ah, yes, the water leaves no trace."

"The thing has come upon the boss so suddenly though that he is kinder taken unprepared," Conkey Bill explained.

"He tried to get word to some fellows whom he could trust to meet him here to-night, but the spotters kept after him so closely that he was afraid to risk the racket, for fear they might spring some trap and nab him."

"I'm the only man on the place, and when it comes to the water I'm not much on that lay, so the Cap is mightily short-handed."

"I've a man here whom Boloni secured; he's a French refugee, and can be trusted, for he brings good credentials from across the water."

"He is a native of one of the French islands too, and as nearly all the islanders are as much at home on the water as on the land, it is more than possible that he is an expert sailor."

"I will question him!"

Laying his hand upon Durange's arm he awoke him from his sleep.

He was apparently refreshed by the nap, for he awoke in a moment and cried:

"Aha, *mon ami*, have we arrived?"

"We have; tell me, can you sail a boat?"

"As well as the best captain that ever stepped foot upon a frigate's deck!" he replied, descending from the buggy.

"*Morbleu!* I was born on the water!"

"You are the very man for us then!" Conkey Bill exclaimed.

"The captain will be delighted to see you, so come along."

Bill tied the horse to the hitching-post in front of the porter's lodge, and then led the way to the mansion.

The French boy walked by his side, and Durange brought up the rear, humming a popular operatic air.

He was still a little unsteady in his walk, but the ride seemed to have cleared his brain.

There was not a single sign to show that the house was occupied as the party approached it.

All the window-blinds were closed, and the desolation and the dampness of death seemed to have settled upon the old mansion.

Conkey led the way to a small door in the side of the house.

He produced a key from his pocket, unlocked the door, and then led the way down a short flight of steps which brought the party into the cellar of the mansion.

"It's mighty queer that this blasted, infernal detective should be able to hunt the captain out of two such nice hiding-places as this and the old den among the rocks," the guide remarked, as he ushered the party into the cellar.

"If I believed in devils in human shape, I should be inclined to believe that this feller was one of that kidney," he said, in conclusion.

There was a table and a couple of chairs in the center of the cellar, and upon the table a candle burned, giving light to the apartment.

No one was in the cellar, and the French boy looked around him inquiringly.

Conkey understood the meaning of the glance.



"If you're looking for the captain, I s'pose he's in there, a-talking to the gal," and the speaker pointed to a door in the rear of the cellar.

"Tellin' her, you know, for to git ready for this 'ere great vanishing act."

"How does she bear it?"

"As quiet as a lamb; she's a plucky little thing and goes on the old saying, I s'pose, 'wot can't be cured must be endured.'"

"It wouldn't do her a bit of good to kick, you know, and I s'pose she come to that idea, and so takes it as easy as possible."

"A wise conclusion," observed the French boy.

"Peste! what else could one do?" Durange remarked.

At that moment the door in the rear of the cellar opened, and the outlaw chief who was known as Captain Pelican made his appearance.

He looked exactly the same as when we first introduced him to our readers.

His beard was as black and as bushy as ever and his face as pale.

"Aha, it is well that you have come!" he exclaimed, his eyes sparkling as he caught sight of the French boy.

"And who is this?" he asked, surveying Durange with a piercing, penetrating gaze which evinced that the captain was particularly curious.

"This is the man whom Boloni procured, and as luck has it he is a good sailor," the French boy answered.

"Let him speak for himself!" exclaimed the captain, sharply.

"Who are you, what is your name, and can you handle a boat?"

"I can as well as any man that ever trod—" but the so-called Frenchman never finished the sentence, for he was abruptly interrupted by the captain of the gang.

"We are betrayed!" he cried, in violent rage, and he reached for his weapons.

But the intruder was on the watch for just such an event, and before the outlaw chief could produce his weapons the other had both him and the French boy and Conkey Bill covered with a pair of heavy self-cocking revolvers.

"Don't dare to draw a weapon, any one of you!" he cried, in commanding accents and with an entire change of voice, "or I'll put a ball right through you," and then dropping into the dialect he spoke so well, he added:

"Alle samee 'Melican man!'"

It was the Chinese Detective.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### HUNTED DOWN.

As far as the French boy and Conkey Bill were concerned the surprise was complete, for although Henri had at first looked upon the Frenchman with considerable suspicion, yet he had played his part so well that his distrust had been lulled to slumber.

Bill, of course, had not suspected that anything was wrong, having no reason so to do.

The captain, though, being a genius, was quick to penetrate the disguise of the bloodhound who had tracked him so relentlessly.

And his rage and astonishment at finding that the spy had succeeded in hunting him down was so great that he had not paused to calculate whether it was better to keep the fact to himself until he got a chance to take the other at a disadvantage or not.

The explosion had come, though, and he stood helpless before his foe.

"I've got you dead to rights at last!" exclaimed the victor, without any trace of foreign accent in his voice now.

"You have been tracked to this house by one party of spies, and there's another gang who have followed my heels, so there's no use for you to attempt to get out of it."

"Throw down your weapons and surrender. You've made a bold fight of it, but the game has gone against you now and the end has come."

"All right; there's no use of a man kicking when he's forced to the wall, so I'll give up," responded the outlaw chief, in a dogged sort of way, yet with an evident attempt to take his defeat as easily as possible.

But there was a glitter in his eyes which belied his words, and the bloodhound who had so skillfully hunted him down was watching his eyes, just as the experienced duelist watches the eyes of his adversary in order to be prepared for the attack.

"Put your weapons down on the floor at your feet," he commanded.

The other drew forth a revolver as if he intended to comply with the demand, and then suddenly leveled it at the foe who had compassed his downfall.

The other was prepared for the movement, however, and was not taken by surprise as the outlaw chief had expected.

His revolver was leveled with deadly aim at the breast of the bandit, and before his finger could pull the trigger of his weapon, the sharp, quick bark of the bloodhound's pistol rung through the apartment.

The aim was a deadly one.

Straight through the heart of the outlaw tore the leaden ball.

He gasped convulsively.

Made a desperate effort to discharge his pistol, and then fell down all in a heap, writhing in the agonies of death.

"I hated to kill him, but it was either his life or mine, and in such a case a man can't hesitate!" the killer exclaimed.

And the tone of his voice was so threatening that the other two feared that he might turn the muzzle of his smoking weapon upon them.

Conkey Bill threw down his arms, a heavy revolver and a murderous-looking knife, with wonderful alacrity.

As for the French boy, he had fallen upon his knees and burst into a flood of tears the moment he saw the destruction which the deadly revolver of the spy had wrought.

"Hold on! don't shoot, there ain't the least bit of fight in me!" Conkey Bill exclaimed.

And it was quite true.

He had already tested the prowess of the man-hunter, and he hadn't the remotest idea of trying it on again.

"Do not kill me! I am a woman," the supposed French boy cried between her sobs.

"Yes, I know that. I penetrated your disguise, although you were not able to detect that I was sailing under false colors," the victor replied.

"You are Marie Deschamps, the maid of Miss Carrickford, and the sweetheart, I presume, of this man who has fallen by my bullet."

"It was through your aid that he was able to abduct Miss Carrickford."

"You administered an opiate by some means to her and then your accomplice entered the room by means of the window which looked out upon the roof of the extension and so made his way with her to the street, where a close carriage was in waiting and in it she was borne away."

"You remained and attended to the duties of your position as usual and in the confusion that attended the discovery of the disappearance of the young lady you managed to lock the fastenings of the window, through which the young lady was carried, so all trace of the means by which your accomplice entered the apartment was destroyed."

"You are a sorcerer!" exclaimed the girl, astonished at the knowledge possessed by the bloodhound.

"Is not this the truth?"

"It is," she replied.

"It was through you that I got on the right track," he remarked.

"Ten years ago in a police court in France I saw you sentenced to the galleys for five years for attempted murder, and I immediately recognized you when I saw you again."

"That was when I began to 'shadow' the inmates of Mr. Carrickford's house with the idea of discovering if there was any one in the house who was not above suspicion."

"I followed you and so got on the track; first I struck the path which led me to the old house by the river, then the one which began at Boloni's saloon, and afterward captured the man in charge of the house in Twenty-fifth street, and from him extorted a confession."

The mystery was explained now, and the girl became sullen in her despair, the storm of grief having abated almost as suddenly as it had risen.

Handcuffs were fastened around the wrists of both prisoners, and by the time this little ceremony was performed the detectives, who had followed closely upon the trail, came pouring into the house.

The white beans, a pocketful of which the Chinese Detective had provided, and which he had dropped from time to time while pretending to be asleep in the buggy and when walking in the rear of the other two from the porter's lodge to the house, served to lead the pursuers directly to the cellar.

With the detectives came the railroad king and General Binkerton, who had been notified by the Chinese Detective that the game would probably be run to earth that night.

"I've got my man, gentlemen," said the Chinese Detective, as the others came into the cellar.

"I made up my mind to take him either dead or alive, and I'm sorry to say that, as he showed a disposition to be ugly and pretty near got 'the drop' on me, I had to plug him."

"I hated to do it, but there was no other course open to me."

"My daughter, sir; have you found my child—where is she?" cried Carrickford, anxiously looking around the apartment, and alarmed at not perceiving his girl.

"She's all safe, sir, I believe," replied the Chinese Detective.

And then he went to the door in the rear wall of the cellar and turned the key which the outlaw chief had left in the lock.

"Miss Carrickford, here is your father!" he exclaimed, as he opened the door.

With a glad scream of joy, the girl came rushing forth and threw herself into her father's arms.

"You are safe, my child; you have not been hurt?" the millionaire inquired anxiously.

"No; but the suspense and agony through which I have passed has been terrible," the girl replied.

"Thank Heaven that you have been restored to me!" cried Carrickford.

"And you, sir, you to whom I owe this great service, what can I do for you? Name your reward, and if it is in my power you shall have it!"

"Oh, I'm not particularly anxious about any reward," the other answered, carelessly.

"I'm only an amateur detective; but I guess the regulars will own that I hain't made a botch of this my first case."

"And this unfortunate wretch?" said Carrickford, pointing to the dead man.

The detectives stripped off the false beard and the wig, and the handsome features of the broker Rochville stood revealed.

"I would not have believed it—I imagined it was my unfortunate nephew, Harry Carrickford," said the millionaire.

"That is my name," observed the Chinese detective, coolly. "For years I have been a wanderer in foreign lands, made some strange acquaintances, and experienced some odd adventures, particularly in Paris, and thanks to a poor wretch, who was shot by the gendarmes, and died in the garden of my house, I was able to gain the confidence of this rascally saloon-keeper, Boloni, who I believe was the real contriver of this outrage."

"I told you, Mr. Carrickford, that the time would come when you would live to regret your conduct toward me."

"Was my prediction correct?"

With tears in his eyes the millionaire took the hands of the detective and begged him to forget the past.

"I can explain it now, for death has unsealed my lips," the other said. "In the past I shielded the man who was to me as a father. He was tempted into speculation, and before he knew it was on the brink of ruin. To save him I assumed the burden, though it drove me a fugitive from my native land. I have his letters, which I will give you, explaining all."

And now, reader, our tale is told.

Thanks to the skill of the young bloodhound every member of the gang was hunted down and punished.

To the millionaire he became like a son, and rumor declares that the gentle girl, whom he rescued, looks upon him as she has never looked upon any other man, and the future promises much happiness to the young adventurer whom the world terms the Chinese Detective.

THE END.

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BEADLE AND ADAMS, PUBLISHERS,  
98 William Street, New York.